
Diversity, Pluralism and Multiculturalism Tool Kit for Kids/Preschoolers/Kindergarteners

This toolkit contains a compilation of conceptual and practical approaches on the theme of diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism. It is meant for teaching beginners or kindergarten students. It is expected that the presented information and resources in this toolkit will aid individuals, schools and religious institutions to reflect on their existing work practices, broaden their teaching and learning ideas, and inspire creativity and new ways of work keeping the target audience in mind.

Importance of Diversity (for teachers/facilitators)

Why is diversity so important?

Diversity is important because the world is changing every day. It is essential to learn to accept and get along with people of all cultures, races, and religions to become productive citizens of the world. As teachers/educators/parents/leaders, it is necessary to prepare our children for the real world which is very diverse. Chances are, by the time the students in your classroom reach the real world it will be a much more diverse place than it is now and we need to prepare them for that.

Importance of Multiculturalism

Why multiculturalism is important?

Multiculturalism is important because it reduces ignorance and encourages dialogue between cultures having different perspectives and ideologies. It manifests as an acceptance and respect for all cultures in a pluralistic society. While exploring similarities and differences among cultures, it develops an understanding and appreciation of one's own cultural heritage as well as for other cultures. It promotes the values of respect, peace, and equality.

(Reference: https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2007/01/01/the_value_of_multiculturalism.html , <https://communikids.com/the-importance-of-teaching-multiculturalism-diversity/>).

Importance of Pluralism

Why pluralism is important?

Pluralism is important as it allows widespread participation and feeling of commitment from the society members to achieve better outcomes. It is based on dialogue where both speaking and listening is involved, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. We must teach our children that pluralism does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind, but rather we must hold them in relationship to one another (<http://pluralism.org/what-is-pluralism/>).

Little tips for making classrooms/multi-faith/interfaith rooms more diverse

- Choose to display pictures or artwork on the wall showing a variety of children from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Provide books in the classroom or library that show children of different races, religions, or cultures.
- Discuss the differences and similarities in cultures and religions with your students/children openly.
- Provide students with paint, paper, and crayons as often as possible and allow students to choose the color of paint, paper, or crayons they want to use.
- If possible, find an international pen pal for your class or communicate with a class in a different country via Skype/Zoom.
- If you discuss one cultural/religious holiday in class, make sure to discuss others. For example, instead of focusing only on Christmas, ensure to cover and give equal time to Hanukkah, Eid, and Kwanzaa too. Also, discuss the Lunar New Year, Ramadan, and Diwali when they approach (Reference: <https://www.pre-kpages.com/multicultural/>).

Activities on the Topic

Activity Name: How Comfortable Am I?

Concept: diversity, multiculturalism

Activity Objectives:

- To identify the markers of diversity in our daily lives
- To understand the stereotypes that are generally used in different segments of society
- To understand the role of language in either dividing people or bringing them together

Resources: A worksheet (such as one suggested below), pencils

(Note: you can change the statements in this worksheet as per your needs)

Activity Worksheet

Mark your level of comfort for each statement using a tick sign (✓).

No		Not Comfortable	Uneasy	Fairly Comfortable	Completely Comfortable
	Example: Your new neighbor is Pakistani			✓	
1	Your friend is fat				
2	Your classmate is a Muslim				
3	We went to a Chinese restaurant				
4	Your math instructor speaks with a British accent.				

5	My aunt lives in a Black neighborhood				
6	This baker is Iranian				
7	Head of this mosque is a woman				
8	A Syrian immigrant student invites you to dinner with her family				
9	They went to Christmas party				
10	You are asked to prepare a presentation on diversity for your community.				

Key Takeaways from Activity:

- Teaching kids how to use inclusive language by discouraging unnecessary labeling.
- Labels cause us to lose sight of the person and their individuality and focus on the label instead (for adults, we refer to this as stereotyping). Children understand uniqueness. It's what makes them special.
- Creating a realization in children that being different is 'ok' and they should be comfortable with differences. Not everyone is the same.
- Language can unite or divide people.
- Do not generalize!

2. Activity Name: Indulge in Different Cuisines

Concept: diversity, multiculturalism

Activity Objectives:

- To encourage cultural awareness and experimentation through food
- To enlighten students about how ingredients coming from different regions contribute in making their favorite local dish/cuisine

Resources: Different kinds of bread, dishes or desserts from different cultures

Activity

Serve different kinds of bread as a snack to children in your classroom. This is an easy beginning to global food study. As you munch on croissants, pitas, tortillas, matzo, chapatti, and dark breads have a class discussion about who eats these breads and the countries where these bread are most popular. Next thing, have parents assist you in putting together a globally influenced potluck lunch. Ask students to bring a food or dessert that represents their heritage/culture/country. As you engage in this feast, discuss where each dish originated. Following the potluck, collect the recipes from each family, compile them, and send a multicultural cookbook home with each child. (Reference: <https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/Exploring-Cultures-in-Your-Classroom-Activities-to-Try1710.html>)

Takeaways from Activity

- Every culture and country has its uniqueness that makes it distinct, yet, people from all cultures and countries eat food which is important for everyone's body like our own body. Individuals are embedded in their cultures and traditions.

- Some children may be afraid of new experiences, and that includes food. One of the best ways to introduce an unfamiliar culture is to sample the cuisine.
- How fusion of different ingredients is necessary for creating a delicious dish/cuisine

3. Activity Name: **Why do people disagree?**

Concept: Pluralism

Activity Objectives:

- To encourage students to consider reasons why people have different opinions on important issues.
- The students are able to discuss contested issues.
- An understanding is imparted in students on how to react if issues are not agreed on.

Activity

The teacher asks the class to consider the following controversial statements, one at a time: Agree or disagree?

- It is wrong to eat animals.
- Only women are the best cooks
- People who are born in Canada are only good

Both corners of the classroom are labeled with either 'agree' or 'disagree' tags. The teacher reads out each statement in turn and asks the students to move to the appropriate corner of the room, according to their views on the above questions. If they cannot decide, they should remain where they are. When students have taken up their positions, the teacher asks someone in both corners to say why they have chosen that position. No discussion should be allowed at this stage. Next, the teacher asks students who have not made up their mind try to explain why they cannot decide. In a plenary session, the teacher points out that the same issues evoked very different responses from class members. He/she can then introduce the concept of pluralism and explaining that they can help to understand the reasons why pluralism exists in societies.

Takeaways from the Activity

- Respect other people's opinions.
- Remember that talking is better than fighting.
- Try not to give offence.
- Give people a chance to have their say.
- If people cannot agree, we may need a mechanism (such as voting) to make a decision.

(Reference: <https://www.living-democracy.com/textbooks/volume-3/part-1/unit-3/lesson-2/>)

4. Activity Name: **All of our colors**

Concept: diversity and multiculturalism

Activity Objectives:

- To create awareness that humans are of different skin colors, yet, they are all part of the human race.
- To understand the physical differences and similarities
- To develop understanding that skin colors do not make one superior against other

Resources:

- Red, yellow, black, and white paints
- White paper/paintbrushes
- Mixing cups/plates
- Containers of water
- Wax paper (to use as a mixing palette)
- Craft sticks

Activity

- Encourage children to observe special traits of their friends including eye color, hairstyles, or skin tones, etc.
- Ask children to use red, yellow, black and white paints focusing on how color mixtures can create different skin tones.
- Tape wax paper to the art table. Provide paintbrushes, paints, containers of water, craft sticks for mixing colors, and white paper. Invite small groups of children to work together to experiment with mixing the colors. Help where needed.
- Ask children to use the colors to see how many different skin tones they can create. Can they mix colors similar to their skin colors or those of their friends?
- After all the children have had an opportunity to experiment with the color mixtures, ask children to present their work in front of the class.
- Question what they learned about mixing colors. What did they learn about skin color from this activity? How many different variations of skin tones did they create?

Takeaways from activity

- People should not be discriminated against or stereotyped on the basis of their color, skin tone or physical features.
- Celebrate human diversity and diversity within one's own family, classroom, culture, and country.
- Celebrate the colors of children and the colors of love and humanity (Reference: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/activity-plan-all-our-colors/>).

5. Activity Name: **Multicultural Apples**

Concept:

Multiculturalism Activity

Objectives:

- To show how different each one of the children is
- To make children understand that appearance is just a trait.
- To understand everyone is the same despite differences **Resources:** 1 red apple and 1 green apple, sharp knife

Activity

Observe as a group how different each one of the children is. Skin, hair, eyes, clothes, favorites, dislikes, etc. Make sure everyone is aware that they are not like each other. Now hold up the red apple. Have the children describe it. Hold up the green apple, have the children describe it. Have them discover the regard of the outward appearance of the apples. Compare the apples outward appearance to the children's outward appearance.

Now cut one apple and talk about what you see inside the apple. Cut the other apple (same direction). Compare. They are the same on the inside. Explain to the children that the 2 apple skin looked very different on the outside, but they both have seeds, juice, etc. on the inside. They look different but they are also the same

(Reference: <http://www.childfun.com/themes/world/multicultural/>).

Takeaways from Activity

- People look different but they are also the same.
- Everyone looks different on the outside, but it is what is inside that really counts

6. Activity Name: 'Handprint

Rainbows' **Concept:** diversity and multiculturalism **Objectives:**

- To encourage students to participate in creating a collage/rainbow from handprints of different colors and sizes.
- To teach them the importance of teamwork.

Resources: Colored paints of your choice, large paper or cardboard, trays to put paint on for handprints, optional: rubber gloves

Activity

- Ask the children to choose a color they want their handprint to be.
- Ask each child to put their hand out, spreading their fingers.
- Let the child dip his/her hand into the color of their choice.
- Place the child's hand onto the row of their color choice.
- Discuss the differences in size and shape of all the children's handprints.

Takeaways from the Activity:

- Every human (handprint) is different but all humans together make a diverse world (beautiful rainbow).
- Kids learn to recognize color recognition and teamwork.



(Reference: <https://kinderart.com/art-lessons/multic/handprint-rainbows/>)

7. Activity Name: 'Hats of faith'

Concept: pluralism and religious diversity
Objectives:

- To introduce children to hats and head coverings from various religions, faiths, and cultures.
- To educate young people to spread love, tolerance, and acceptance for people of all faiths irrespective to their identity markers

Resources: Pictures of people/characters of different faiths wearing different caps and head covers representing different religious identities (such as rasta hat, turban or scarf).

(Note: use the hats/head covers that are available in your context)



Activity

This is a simple activity where the facilitator/teacher brings different hats and head covers representing different faiths in the classroom. The instructor let kids identify if they have seen people wearing these type of hats/head covers around them? If yes, what colors were they? Who are these people? Can kids relate to these people? Why do they wear these hats or head covers? How are the religious head covering different from normal hats and caps? Can one still be religious if he/she does not wear such a head covering?

As a classroom reading activity, the instructor then reads out the book 'Hats of Faith' with children in the classroom using prop hats. During the discussion on the book, the instructor should highlight the aspects of acceptability, tolerance, equality, and love for all religions and humans in general. This activity is ideal for kids' in a multi-faith or multicultural classroom.

Takeaways from activity

- Young children may not be able to fully grasp the concept of faith/culture-based head coverings, but they will at least be exposed to different types of people and dress.
- Help to minimize fear and ignorance towards different faiths and cultures.
- Starting point to explore relevant topics such as acceptance, difference, diversity and bullying on the basis of religions and culture.
- Humans should be treated kindly, and respectfully not on the basis of religions or culture but as 'global citizens'. Here, kids may not fully grasp the idea of 'global citizenship' but introduce the qualities that are important for this idea.

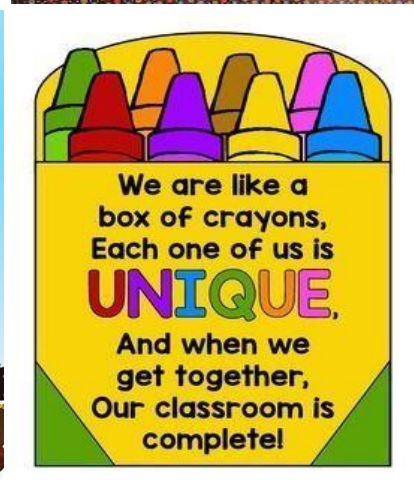
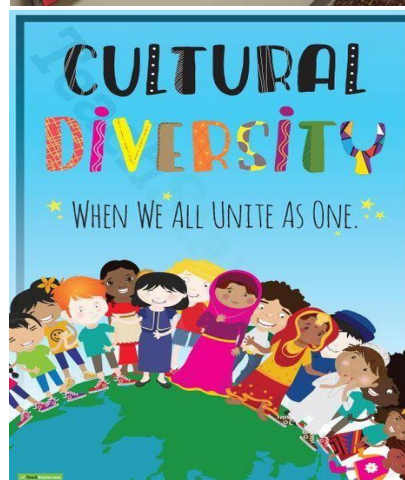
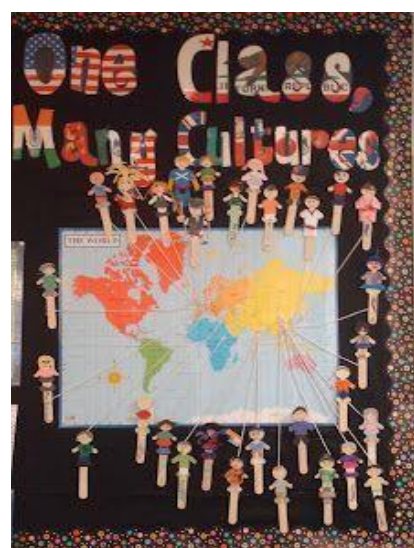
(Reference: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2018/may/spreading-love-and-acceptance-why-i-wanted-to-write-hats-of-faith/>.)

Suggestions to teach values of diversity and pluralism to kids

- Respond to children's questions and comments about differences. Children often interpret a lack of response to mean that it is not acceptable to talk about differences. If you are not sure about the answer, get back with the answer later but do answer them.
- Mold your response to the child's age and personality. Children generally want to know why people are different, what this means, and how those differences relate to them. As children's questions and comments are a means to gather information for them about aspects of their identity and usually do not stem from bias or prejudice.
- For responding to children questions regarding differences, similarities, biases, pluralism, and human values etc., discuss with your families and colleagues to get new ideas.
- If children are nonverbal, observe and respond to their curiosity. For example, if a child is staring at or patting the head of a child whose hair is very different from hers, you can say, "He has straight hair, and you have curly hair."

- Demonstrate the behaviors and attitudes you want children to develop. Pay particular attention to situations that can either promote prejudice or show a child's openness to diversity and multiculturalism though a child would not know the names of these concepts.
- Do not allow a racist and prejudicial comment and name-calling of someone's religion, race, ethnic background, nationality or sexual orientation without intervening.
- Try to create opportunities for children to intermingle and make friends with children who are different from them.
- Involve families in sharing their traditions.
- Try to expose children to role models and good aspects from their own culture as well as to those from other cultures (Reference: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/teaching-diversity-place-begin-0/>).

Ideas for classroom/multi-faith/interfaith room board displays



Relevant resources

- Pang, V.O. (2004). Multicultural education: A caring-centered, reflective approach. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zimmerman, T., Aberle, J., & Krafchick, J. (2005). FAIR: A diversity and social justice Curriculum for school counselors to integrate school-wide. *Guidance & Counseling*, 21, 47-56.
- Working With Parents on Issues of Diversity, by Dora Pulido-Tobiassen and Janet Gonzalez-Mena, reprinted with permission from California Tomorrow.
- <https://www.akfc.ca/resources/educators/reading-list-global-citizens/>

Relevant Children Books

- It's Okay to be Different (diversity)
- The Skin You Live In (acceptance)
- Same, Same But Different (culture and geography)
- Whoever You Are (diversity)
- The Family Book (different family configurations)
- Hats of faith (pluralism, religious diversity)

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