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Magician with a Mission

Color Your World



Classroom photo by Rich Sofranko

STUDY GUIDE

Edited & Designed by Kathleen Riemenschneider

Artists on Tour

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Color Your World takes the serious topic of diversity and presents it in a fun and magical way. Using magic, puppets, storytelling, and music, your students will learn conflict resolution, dealing with bullying, and accepting differences. They'll learn about sign language, Braille, and what it might be like to have different abilities and disabilities. The color of our skin, eyes, hair, and clothes make each of us unique. Our religions, beliefs, customs, and diets may be different. We may celebrate different holidays and even speak different languages. But, through understanding and tolerance, we can all live together even if we don't always agree.

ACTIVITIES

Adapted from Human Right Here and Now, edited by Nancy Flowers. A publication of the Human Rights Educator's Network of Amnesty International USA, Human Rights USA, and the Stanley Foundation (1998).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?

1. Write the word "human" at the top of chart paper or a blackboard. Below the word "human" draw a circle or the outline of a human being. Ask participants to brainstorm what qualities define a human being and write the words or symbols inside the outline. For example, "intelligence," "sympathy."
2. Next ask participants what they think is needed in order to protect, enhance, and fully develop these qualities of a human being. List their answers outside the circle, and ask participants to explain them. For example, "education," "friendship," "loving family."
3. Discuss:
 - What does it mean to be fully human? How is that different from just "being alive" or "surviving"?
 - Based on the list, what do people need to live in dignity?
 - Are all human beings essentially equal? What is the value of human differences?
 - Can any of our "essential" human qualities be taken from us? For example, only human beings can communicate with complex language; are you human if you lose the power of speech?

- What happens when a person or government attempts to deprive someone of something that is necessary to human dignity?
 - What would happen if you had to give up one of these human necessities?
4. Explain that everything inside the circle relates to human dignity, the wholeness of being human. Everything written around the outline represents what is necessary to human dignity.

Variation for Younger Children

1. Ask children sitting in circle to think of a quality about themselves that they consider a good quality. Using a talking stick or simply speaking in turns, ask each to describe that quality briefly.
 - Note that everyone has good qualities.
 - If children have difficulty generating qualities about themselves, ask “What are some qualities we admire in people?” and write a list of responses on the board. Have each child pick one that is true for her or him.
2. Ask some of these questions:
 - Do you respect in others the quality you like about yourself?
 - Do you respect good qualities in others that you do not have?
 - Do all human beings deserve respect? Why?
 - How do you show respect for others?
3. Ask the children if they can remember a time when they felt hurt because someone did not respect them.
 - Did someone say something insulting or hurtful to you?
 - Why do people sometimes say bad things to each other?
4. Ask the group how human beings differ from other living creatures. Emphasize that human beings communicate with words, not just sounds, and that they decide many things about their lives.
5. Ask “What does it mean if we say that all human beings deserve respect because they all have human dignity?”
6. Ask the children to think of one example of how life in their community could be more peaceful if people showed greater respect for each other.
7. Have children work in pairs or alone to illustrate one way they could show respect to someone. Share these ideas with the rest of the class.

At the end of the Color Your World program the song “Don’t Laugh at Me” is played. A CD containing the song and curriculum materials that deal with social acceptance of everyone is available for free at www.operationrespect.org (click on “Sign up for DLAM program”). The curriculum materials are an excellent addition to this program.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS

NEED: A collection of pictures showing people of many different cultures, ages, and backgrounds

Part A: Considering a Picture

1. Individually, in pairs, or in small groups choose a picture from the selection. Study the picture and discuss some of the following questions.
2. Questions about universality:
 - Why did you choose this picture? Why do you think the photographer chose this subject?
 - What do you find in the picture that serves as a mirror of your own life, reflecting something familiar that you can easily recognize?
 - What do you find in the picture that serves as a window onto another culture or way of living, something that is strange and unfamiliar to you?
 - What do you think is going on here (e.g., is it a working environment? a religious setting?).
 - How is the person(s) feeling?
 - In what ways do you think the person(s) in the picture lives a very different life from you? Has different values? needs? hopes? expectations of life?
 - In what ways do you think the person(s) in the picture is like you? Shares similar values? hopes? needs? expectations?
 - Is this a complete picture of the way the person lives? What might be missing?
 - Is there any evidence of victimization in this picture? Of privilege? Of discrimination or privilege based on class? gender? ethnicity?
3. Questions about human dignity:
 - Does this picture express human dignity? How? Does anything in the picture seem to detract from the human dignity of the people in it? How?
 - How would this photograph be different if it were made a century ago? A hundred years from now? Do you think that our ideas about human dignity are changing? If yes, what do you think has brought about this change? Can you relate that change to our understanding of human rights?
 - Does the picture encourage an appreciation of human dignity?
 - Why do you think the photographer chose this subject? Why do artists so often chose the human condition as the subject of their work?

Part B: Grouping the Pictures

1. Place all the pictures together on the floor or the wall and consider them as a group.
 - What common features do all these pictures share?
 - What do these pictures say about what it is to be human?
 - If all of these pictures were taken in the same society, what conclusions could you draw about the society?
 - How would these photographs be different if conditions changed (e.g., a civil war? discovery of oil in the region? achievement of equality for women? strictly enforced child labor laws? or compulsory primary education? a livable minimum wage? a viral epidemic for which no vaccine is available?).
 - Based on this collection of pictures, what statements can you make about human dignity?
2. Try to group certain pictures together into categories.

Adaptation for Younger Children

- Why did you choose this picture?
- What do you see that is like your own life, something familiar that you can easily recognize?
- What do you see that is unfamiliar and different from your own life? Is there anything in the picture that you don't recognize or understand?
- In what part of the world do you think this picture was taken?
- How do you think this person is like you? In what ways is the person not like you?
- What do you think the person(s) in this picture is doing?
- Make up a story about the person(s) in this picture.
- How do you think the person(s) in this picture feels?
- What will the person in this picture do tonight? Tomorrow morning? What will he or she do that you do also? What do you think he or she will do differently or not at all?
- What do you think this person enjoys doing?
- What do you think this person will be like in a few years?
- What do you think this person would like to tell you? To ask you? What would you like to tell or ask this person?
- Draw a picture that illustrates one of the questions above. Try to copy the picture, matching colors and shapes as closely as possible.