



THEME OF THE WEEK: DIVERSITY - The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. Most simply put, diversity is **what makes us different from one another**. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, and/or political beliefs.

It is the exploration of these differences in a **safe, positive, and nurturing environment** that helps us to both understand and appreciate others. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. **Hate based on cultural differences is a learned behavior.**

TIME: 75 minutes

CLASSROOM TEACHER/STUDENT PREPARATION: None

ACTIVITIES:

Small group..... Check In/How Was Your Week? (5 minutes)

Why is diversity important? (10 minutes)

Diversity Necklace (25 minutes)

Global Village (10 minutes)

Large group..... Diversity Dot activity and discussion (25 minutes)

SUPPLIES:

Your Allies Binder

Beads/string/scissors for Diversity Necklace

Diversity Dots

Handouts:

Diversity Necklace Instructions

The Global Village

“America is not like a blanket—one piece of unbroken cloth. America is more like a quilt—many patches, many pieces, many colors, and many sizes, all woven together by a common thread.”

NAME REVIEW & CHECK-IN: (5 MINUTES)

Consider having a more serious check-in to set the mood for a serious activity.

WHY FOCUS ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY WITH STUDENTS (FOR YOUR OWN LEARNING)?

First, a quick definition of culture:

Whenever people form a group of any size, they develop, share, and teach social norms that help them carry on together. Most of these norms are unconscious “rules” that impact every level of each person’s life. While it can be a contributor, culture DOES NOT refer to one’s race or skin color. Culture will encompass:

- 🌀 Beliefs
- 🌀 Values
- 🌀 Attitudes
- 🌀 Perceptions
- 🌀 Behaviors

Our cultural training starts the moment we are born and continues throughout our life. For instance, pink and blue clothes on newborns cues everyone who interacts with the baby to treat the child as either a boy, or a girl, according to cultural norms.

Like an **iceberg**, most of the social programming is under the surface. Our perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs lie below the surface, or “below the water.” Only our behaviors, including our spoken thoughts, are evident to others, or “above the water.”



Many people, youth and adults alike, look only through the lens of their own cultural influences. They also believe that their culture is “the only one” or “the right one.” Tension arises whenever people hold rigidly to this notion. Reducing this tension can increase school harmony, stop prejudice, help avoid violence in schools, and reduce bullying.

- Studying cultural diversity helps students learn more about themselves as individuals, their family norms, and the cultures of their peers. This knowledge supports each student’s psychological and social growth. It also opens the conversations that break down cultural barriers, and:
 - Contributes to classroom, school, and community harmony
 - Eliminates prejudice
 - Stops potential hate and peer violence
 - Reduces bullying
- The cognitive effort required for breaking through stereotypes and narrow attitudes enhances complex thinking and development of values, ethics, and character.
- Studying cultural diversity is an opportunity for teachers and students to work together in instructional conversations. It also connects curriculum to kids’ experiences, home, and community and can provide a link to other curricular areas.
- Lastly, studying cultural diversity can be intellectually satisfying and fun.

1. The Global Market

Ask the following questions:

- We have all heard the expression that our world is shrinking. What exactly does that mean?
- What is “the global market” and where can it be found?

4 out of every 5 new jobs created are the result of foreign trade so to a large extent the strength of our economy depends largely on our ability to do business with other parts of the world. It is increasingly important that we learn not to just get along, but to understand and appreciate people from other cultures.

2. Changing Demographics

Just a few short decades ago 3 out of every 4 Americans were Whites. Today, over 30% of the U.S. population are people of color. By 2050 Caucasian Americans will be a minority. 1 in 5 Americans will be an immigrant. It was estimated that between 1998 and 2008 70% of new workers entering the workforce were women or people of color. For these reasons, today's teenagers and adults are more likely to face the prospect of interacting and working with people different from themselves. The ability to relate well to all types of people in the workplace is a leadership skill that is becoming more and more important.

3. Changing Concept of America

MELTING POT VS SALAD BOWL

As Americans, we have long thought of and referred to ourselves as a “melting pot”, suggesting the “melting together” of all people, into a harmonious whole with a common culture. It is most commonly used to describe the assimilation of immigrants to the USA, (*assimilate means to become similar to one's environment*). More recently however, proponents of multiculturalism assert that cultural differences within a society are valuable and should be preserved; where different cultures mix, but remain distinct. This more closely mirrors a “Salad Bowl”, where the carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, green peppers, and tomatoes maintain their individual shapes, color, and taste.

How does this notion of a “salad bowl” relate to people?”

The following activity is supposed to mimic the stereotyping and the inappropriate grouping of people into groups that fit the American model of assimilation and the idea of a melting pot.

DIVERSITY DOTS: (30 MINUTES)

Each student will get a Diversity Dot placed on their cheek (NOT FOREHEAD). They are NOT to see the color or design of their dot. Once all the students have a dot on their cheek tell them that they must work together to form groups based on their dots. Once they are all in a group, have the students discuss why they chose the groups they did. Then, tell them that they are not quite right (even though we know there is no correct answer☺). Have the students re-think the idea and form new groups using the dots to decide who goes where. Some students will become frustrated with this activity so good facilitation will be important! Once the students have finished the second time, discuss as a group why they chose the groups that they did. Eventually you will inform them that there was no right and no wrong answer. Use the questions below to help guide your reflection on this activity.

The students will have a lot of questions about how to form groups but you are to provide no further instruction (beyond, “form groups solely based on the dots on your faces”).

PROCESS QUESTIONS:

- *What did we just do? Someone explain exactly what was asked of you.*
- *Who decided how you were going to form your group?*
- *How did you form your groups?*
- *Was this activity hard? Easy? Confusing?*
- *What was hard about it? Confusing? Etc.*
- *How did you feel during the forming of groups?*
- *Did anyone get put into a group without being allowed to give their own input?*
- *Does anyone feel like they wound up in the wrong group?*
- *Who didn't have a group?*
- *What groups are we placed into in our day-to-day lives? Are we ever placed into a group without our input? Are those group labels ever incorrect?*
- *Has anyone ever been placed in a group that wasn't entirely accurate? Talk about that...*
- *How does this activity relate to high school?*
- *What can we take from this activity that will make our school a better place?*

DIVERSITY NECKLACE: (25 MINUTES)

Please refer to the Diversity Necklace handout for this activity.

THE GLOBAL VILLAGE: (15 MINUTES)

Take out the handout titled “If the World Were A Village of 100 People”. Start by reading the scenario at the top then check for understanding,

“If we could reduce the world’s population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same, the demographics would look something like this.”

Then, go in a circle and have students take turns reading one stat each. After all statement have been read, lead a discussion on people’s reactions using the following questions as guidance. This is not a time to argue the validity of the statistics; this should simply be used as a vehicle for creating discussion.

- *What shocked you about the stats?*
- *Which of these statistics do you find least surprising?*
- *Which of these statistics are hard for Americans to even comprehend?*
- *What are the implications of these stats on our society?*
- *Are there any stats that you have a hard time believing?*
- *Do these facts change the way you view the world? Why/Why not?*