

Lesson and Activity Excerpted from the Tanenbaum Curriculum *Passages to Immigration*

Fitting In

Lesson Overview:

Students will explore the issues of home, belonging, fitting in, and what it's like to feel different from one's peers in order to understand that:

- Everyone is unique – both similar to and different from others.
- Often, you have something in common with someone whom you think is different from you.

Whenever you discuss issues of moving to a new place be sure to be inclusive and sensitive. Students may have unique issues that they are facing with regard to their families or living situations. The best sources of information about the students' lives are parents or guardians.

Grades:
1-6

Materials: Art supplies, "I am..." and "We are..." worksheets

Principles for Inclusive Education concepts explored: Preventing Prejudice; Promoting Social Justice; Teaching All Students

Skills Addressed: Comparing and Contrasting; Perspective Taking; Making Inferences

Recommended Books: *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi; *Yoko* by Rosemary Wells; *Halmoni and the Picnic* by Sook Nyul Choi. For more book recommendations, please Tanenbaum's website, www.tanenbaum.org.

PROCEDURE

Activity 1: The Sharing Circle

Students think about difference and the different effects it can have on people's feelings.

Activity 2: Unity and Diversity Circles

Students find out what they have in common with their classmates, as well as what makes them unique!

Activity 3: "I Am" and "We Are" Poems

Students write about their identities as individuals and as a class.

The Sharing Circle

Review the RULES OF RESPECT with students.

1) Instruct students to move into a sharing circle.

- Initiate a discussion with students, using the following questions:
 - Have you ever felt like you were different from other students?
 - What did it feel like?
 - What are the good things about being the same as everybody else?
 - What are the difficult things?
 - What are the good things about being different from everyone else?
 - What are the difficult things?
 - Who is “everyone else”?
 - What is unique and special about you?
 - If you could change some things to fit in better with others, would you?
 - What are some things that you would not change about yourself?
 - What are some things you might be willing to change to fit in?

 - Is anyone ever the same as anyone else?

2) Discuss with the class the experience of feeling “different”.

- Ask students to think of times when this happened in their lives.
 - Almost everyone has had this experience. If students are having trouble thinking of a time, you can direct students to think of the first day in Kindergarten, when they didn’t know anyone and weren’t familiar with the rules.
 - You may also want to tell them about a time when you felt “different” and how you handled the situation. This may help students feel like they can share too.

If you are reading one of the recommended books with this lesson, this is a great place to include it.

Unity and Diversity Circles

- 1) *Divide* participants into groups of four.
- 2) *Provide* each group with a piece of flip chart paper and a few markers. Have each group draw a large circle on their flip chart.
- 3) Outside the circle have the participants write their names and at least three things that are unique about each person.
- 4) Inside the circle have the group identify at least three things they all have in common.
- 5) After all the groups have finished, have them *post* their circles in the classroom.
- 6) Have each group report out their findings to the larger group, introducing aspects of unity and diversity in their group.
- 7) After the game, help the students process the activity by asking these questions:
 - Did you learn something new about any of your classmates?
 - Are there things that people have in common that you didn't know before?
 - Can you tell what a person is really like just by looking at them?
 - What are things that we can do to learn more about one another?

“I Am” and “We Are” Poems

1) Hand out the “I am...” worksheet.

- Ask students to fill in the answers to the sheet. Encourage them to use some of the information from the unity and diversity circles, or their imaginations, to help them.
- Tell students that, if they feel comfortable, they can pair up and share their poems with a classmate.
- Remind students to be respectful and encourage each other.

2) As a class, fill out the “We are...” poem worksheet

- Use characteristics that apply to everyone. (Use the unity and diversity circles for ideas.)
- Leave the poem up in a prominent place in the classroom where everyone can see it.

I AM _____

I am _____

I wonder _____

I hear _____

I want _____

I pretend _____

I feel _____

I worry _____

I hope _____

I understand _____

I say _____

I try _____

I dream _____

I am _____

WE ARE _____

We are _____

We wonder _____

We hear _____

We want _____

We pretend _____

We feel _____

We worry _____

We hope _____

We understand _____

We say _____

We try _____

We dream _____

We are _____