
World Olympics

Preparing Students for a
Multicultural and Multireligious World

A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY TANENBAUM FOR GRADES K-6



Imagine: a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.

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Signs and Symbols of the Olympics

Unit 2, Lesson 2

Objectives: Children learn about the Olympic Torch and the Olympics Rings, which symbolize togetherness and goodwill. Then they will create their own “pinwheels for peace” that express their goodwill wishes for the world.

Skills: Literacy, Art, Communication Skills

Grades: K-6

Recommended Resources: For more information on the history of the Olympic Flame see: <http://www.olympic.org/olympic-torch-relay>

Materials:

- Chart Paper
- Writing Paper
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue

To make a torch:

- Construction Paper (Yellow, Orange, Red)
- Torch Cutout (included)

To make Olympic rings:

- Construction Paper (Red, Blue, Green, Black, Yellow)

To make Pinwheels:

- Instructions for making a Pinwheel (included)
- Straws (one per child)
- Colorful Tacks

Preparation:

Prepare the art materials for this lesson beforehand.

Younger students may need copies of the torch cutout and pre-cut construction paper for the pinwheels.

PROCEDURE

Introduction: Ask the children to look around the classroom. Are there any signs and symbols in the classroom? Are there any signs or symbols students are wearing (buttons, pendants etc.)? Another good place for students to find symbols is in books. Facilitate a discussion with the class: *What signs and symbols are important in your life? Do you wear any signs and symbols? Why are signs and symbols useful?*

Background for Educator: There are many signs and symbols, including religious and cultural symbols, that may carry a lot of importance for individuals. It might be helpful to identify ahead of time symbols that you encounter among your students. Religious symbols might include the Star of David (Jewish), the Cross or Crucifix (Christian), the Star and Crescent (Muslim), Torii (Shinto), Om (Hindu); Kanda (Sikh), to name some. A good website on religious symbolism is <http://www.religionfacts.com/symbols>.

Part I - Olympic Torch

Background for Educator: One of the most important symbols of the Olympics is the Olympic Flame. It burns the entire time that the Olympic Games are taking place. The Olympic Torch is lit in Olympia, Greece, the site of the ancient Olympic Games. It is then carried across the world until it arrives in the country where the Olympics are being held on the day that the Olympics begin. In 2008, the Olympic Torch traveled through 28 cities around the world before entering China. The 2008 torch route passed through the sites of many great ancient civilizations— Greece, Italy, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, India, and finally China. In addition, specially trained mountaineers carried the Olympic flame to the top of Mount Everest (known to the Tibetans as Chomolungma), the highest mountain peak in the world.

During the opening ceremonies, the Olympic Flame is placed in the center of the stadium where it stays lit until the games are over. The flame is put out during the closing ceremonies. If possible, show the children some footage of athletes running with and/or lighting the Olympic flame. Though the Olympic flame was an important symbol of the Olympics in ancient times, in modern times the tradition of the Olympic flame only began in 1928.¹

Step One: Ask students if they can think of any flames that have special significance to them (for example – candles on a Kinara, prayer candles etc.). Tell the students about the Olympic flame (information included above). How are the flames similar and how are they different? What does each flame represent?

Step Two: Tell the children they are going to make their own Olympic flames. If possible, make copies of the torch cutout (included with this lesson) or prepare cardboard stencils for the children. Give each child 3 pieces of construction paper – one yellow, one orange and one of another color that the child chooses, as well as glue and scissors. Also hand out the flame stencils or copies of the templates that you have created for the children to use. You can also help the students draw an outline of the flames on their construction paper.

Step Three: Have the children trace the larger stencil onto the yellow paper, and the smaller stencil onto the orange paper. Next, have them cut out the flames. Finally, the orange flame should be glued onto the yellow flame.

¹ Information from: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/xwdt/t88097.htm>; http://www.nbcnews.com/id/24501387/ns/beijing_olympics-beijing_olympics_news/t/olympic-flame-reaches-mount-everest-summit

Step Four: Have the children roll the unused piece of construction paper into a shape of an ice cream cone. Make sure one end is open and one end closed. Fasten the seams with staples or glue. This will be the base of the torch.

To complete the torch, the children should now put the “flames” into the torch so that part of the flame is inside the cone.

If desired, a large torch can be made for the opening ceremonies of the students’ own final Olympics. Instructions for creating a large torch follow on the next page.

Part II - Olympic Rings

Step One: Ask students if they can think of any rings or circles that are important symbols in their lives. Explain to the children that the Olympic rings are the official symbol of the Olympics. Display a picture of the Olympic rings.

There are five Olympic rings, each in a different color. They are: blue, yellow, black, green, and red. The rings represent the bond/interconnectedness of five regions of the world - Africa, the Americas (North and South), Asia, Europe, and Australia & Oceania. The colors of the rings were chosen because at least one of the five colors (along with white, the background color of the Olympic Flag), appears on the national flag of every country in the world. Have the children look through almanacs or books of flags to see whether all flags have at least one of the colors stated above.¹ The Olympic rings represent the union of the continents and the meeting of athletes from all around the world at the Olympic Games.

Step Two: Have the students create their own Olympic rings. A template for the Olympic rings is included with this lesson for your convenience.

1 Information from: http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en_report_1303.pdf

Creating a Class Torch

Step One: Cut four large pieces of sturdy paper. On two of them, draw the base of a torch. On the other two, draw a large flame. Each pair should be the same size and shape.

Step Two: Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the large pieces of sturdy paper that you have just drawn.

Step Three: Explain to the children that each group will create a piece of the torch.

Step Four: Ask the groups to decide what colors they would like their piece of the torch to be. Provide the children with paint and brushes and ask them to paint their piece.

Step Five: Allow the paper to dry completely.

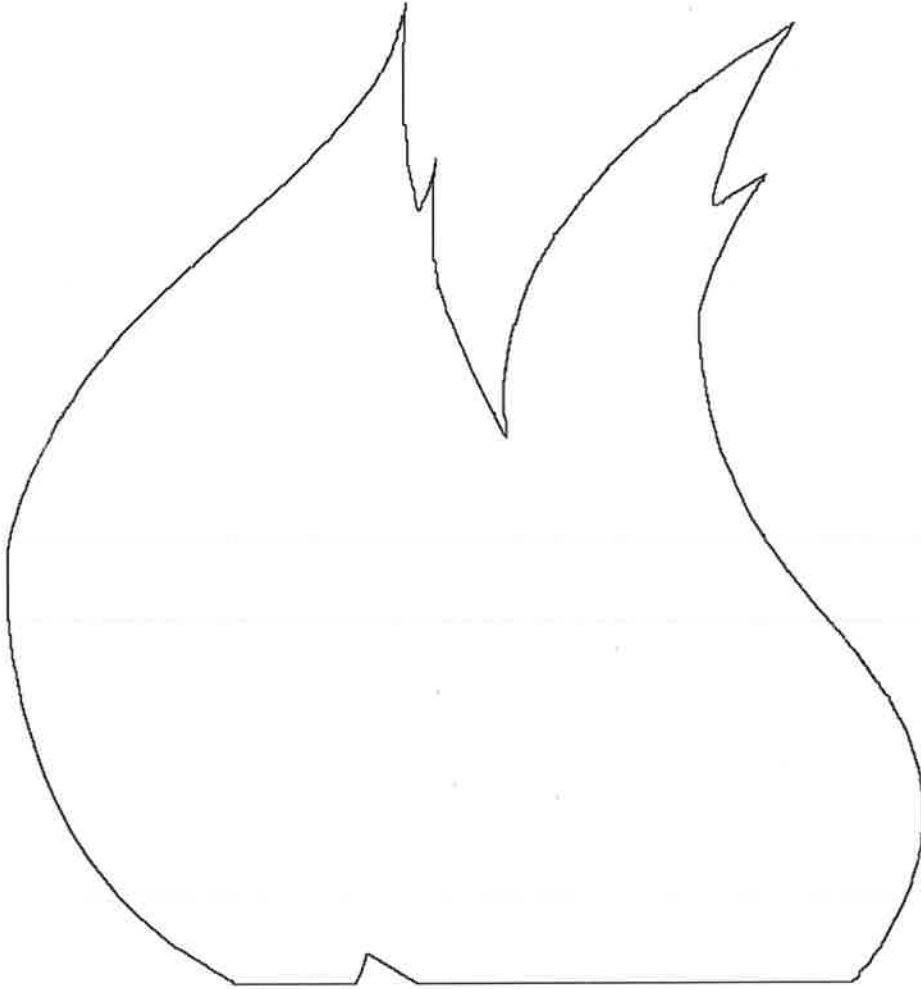
Step Six: Help the children cut each piece out of the sturdy paper. Ask the children to first place the cutouts that will be used as the base on top of each other so that the painted sides are facing outwards. Staple two of the three sides together, and ask the children to stuff the inside with crumpled newspaper. After the inside of the base is fully stuffed, staple the open side together.

Step Seven: Repeat the previous step using the flame cutouts.

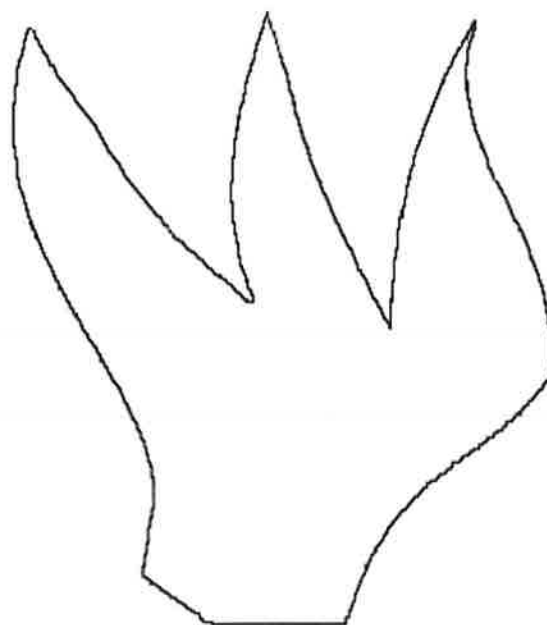
Step Eight: Attach the base and flames together with glue, staples and/or tape.



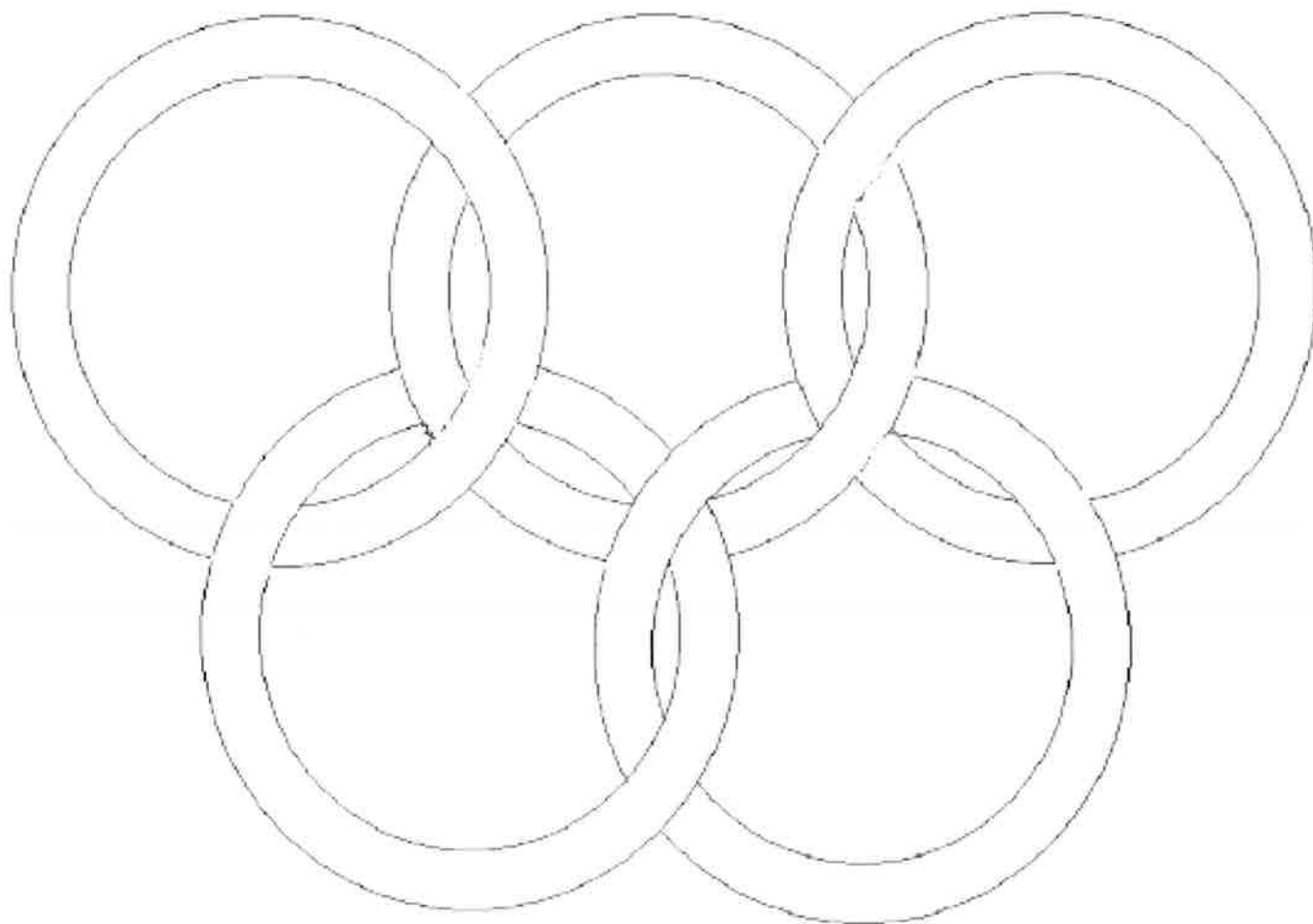
TORCH TEMPLATE



TORCH TEMPLATE



OLYMPIC RINGS



Part III - Pinwheels for Peace

Step One: The Olympic Torch and Rings are a symbol of togetherness and goodwill. Ask students if they can think of other symbols of goodwill or things they do to express their good wishes for someone (for example, shaking hands, being respectful, helping others, asking after someone, etc.).

Step Two: As an example of a symbol of good wishes, tell students about Tibetan prayer flags. Many Tibetan and Nepali Buddhists use prayer flags to bring prayers of goodwill and compassion to the world.

Prayer flags are colorful panels of rectangular cloth that are tied horizontally in groups of five to bless the surrounding countryside and all humans and animals that inhabit it. Prayer flags use the five elemental colors of blue, white, red, green and yellow alternately, which are arranged from left to right. Traditionally, prayer flags are used to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. Tibetans believe the prayers will be blown upward as offerings to the Buddhist deities and will bring benefits (such as happiness and good health) to all who hang them, as well as their families, loved ones, neighbors, and all people and animals throughout the world, including enemies. Prayer flags are usually tied in high places such as the tops of temples, monasteries, trees or mountain passes. By hanging flags in high places, the wind will carry the blessings depicted on the flags to all beings.

Many Tibetans renew their hopes for the world by continually mounting new flags alongside the old. This symbolizes a welcoming of life changes and an acknowledgment that all beings are part of a greater ongoing cycle.¹

Step Three: Explain to students that just like Tibetan prayer flags, they will be making “pinwheels for peace” to symbolize their wishes for the world and place them outside so the wind can carry their wishes around the world. Encourage students to identify wishes for peace, happiness and other positive things for the wind to carry throughout the world.

Have students choose a color of construction paper and cut it into squares. Younger students may need to use pre-cut squares. Then have students cut slits into the four sides as shown in the instructions on the next page. Students can decorate the borders of their pinwheel with markers, crayons, ribbons etc.

Step Four: Have students draw or write on one side their wishes for world peace and happiness. Older students can explain in detail what their idea of living in harmony looks like. This can include all aspects of life – social, cultural, political, and environmental. For example, some students may wish for everyone to live in harmony with nature and the environment, while others may wish for there to be no more war. This is a wonderful lesson to bring in poetry connections. Students can write their wishes out in poetry form.

Step Five: Once students have finished writing their wishes for world happiness, help them create pinwheels according to the directions on the next page. Display the pinwheels outdoors in a windy place, so that the students can see the wind turning the pinwheels. Invite parents and caregivers, teachers and community members to see the display. You can even have visitors make their own pinwheels and add them to the display.

1 Information from: <http://www.prayerflags.com>

Step Six: We strongly recommend that after your pinwheel display is over, you send the pinwheels to the Pinwheels for Peace Project from where they will be sent to children all over the world. For more information: <http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com> and <http://uniteinpeace.org/>.

Making Pinwheels for Peace

Instructions for Pin-Wheel

Materials: 2 pieces of construction paper, scissors, hole punch, a push-pin, a pencil with an eraser.

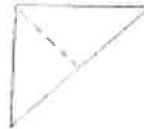
Step One:

Put two pieces of paper together and fold the corners to make a triangle.



Step Two:

Fold the triangle in half.
Unfold the paper.
Make four cuts along the folds,
About half way in.



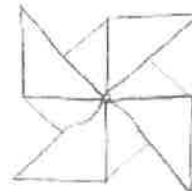
Step Three:

Punch four holes in the pin-wheel-
One in each corner.



Step Four:

Gather each of the corners (with holes)
And bring to the center of the wheel.



Step Five: Push a push-pin through the
Four punched holes and the center of the wheel.
At the same time - push the pin through the side of
A pencil's eraser.



Extension – American Sign Language

Background for the educator: The Deaflympics are the longest running multi-sport event excluding the Olympics themselves. The first games, held in Paris in 1924, were also the first ever international sporting event for athletes who are differently abled. The event has been held every four years since, apart from a break for World War II. The Deaflympic Winter Games were added in 1949. At the first Games in Paris, 145 athletes from nine European nations took part. In 2013 the 22nd Summer Games were held in Sofia, Bulgaria, and about 2700 deaf athletes and officials from 83 nations participated.¹

PROCEDURE

Begin the lesson by signing to the children the sign of the Olympics (the index finger and the thumb of both hands link, disconnect, and then link again to indicate the shape of the linked circles associated with the Olympics). Ask students if anybody understood what you said.

Explain that just like other languages, sign language is a language. Sign language is made up of hand signals that represent letters and words. Some people who are deaf or hard of hearing (i.e. differently abled) use sign language.

During the Olympics, athletes and spectators from around the world come together. During the Olympics, many announcements are signed, so that all the spectators and participants, including those who are unable to hear, can be included.

Tell students about the Deaflympics, which are held every four years for athletes who are deaf. Top athletes participate in the Deaflympics. In the Deaflympics, modifications are made so that everybody can participate. For example, the football referees wave a flag instead of blowing a whistle. On the track, races are started by using a light flash, instead of a starter pistol.

Ask students: *Could these modifications or similar ones be made during their classroom or school-wide Olympics. Why or why not? If yes, what modifications could be made to include everyone? Why is it important to make sure to include everybody in the games?*

Explain to the class that in order to include everyone during the Olympics, it is important to have a signer for American Sign Language, just as it is important to have translators for other languages. In ASL, names are often not spelled out fully, but shortened to the first letter signed in a certain way or on a certain part of the body to identify that person. For example, someone named Sam might sign the letter S on her forehead because she always wears a baseball cap. Someone named Kamiko who likes cats may sign a K stroking her face. Have the students invent a way of signing their first initial that identifies something about them. Students can share their name sign and rationale with the whole class or with a partner.

Then explain that American Sign Language (ASL) also has its own alphabet and words can be finger-spelled. Demonstrate with your own name. Using the alphabet flashcards, go through each letter and have the students practice. Learning and rehearsing the ASL alphabet may take several short sessions. The alphabet song is a good way to learn/rehearse the signs. Also, there is a great game online that helps to learn and recognize fingerspelling at <http://www.funbrain.com/signs>.



























1 Information from: <http://www.deaflympics.com/>

Recommended Websites

ASL Browser – This site has a sign language dictionary that plays video of someone signing words for you to view (<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>).

ASL Fonts – There are some online resources which provide downloadable fonts that represent each letter of the ASL alphabet, so users can type and print words using fingerspelling.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE ALPHABET FLASH CARDS

 A	 B	 C	 D
 E	 F	 G	 H
 I	 J	 K	 L
 M	 N	 O	 P
 Q	 R	 S	 T
 U	 V	 W	 X
 Y	 Z		