

Tolerance

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

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Vs. Prejudice

I WILL:

- not confuse what is right with what is popular
- expect the same of myself as I expect of others
- look for ways to help others mature
- accept my own unchangeables and the unchangeables of others
- listen before I form an opinion

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Realizing that everyone is at varying levels of character development

Dr. Seuss' *When the Star Belly Sneetches had frankfurter roasts Or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts, They never invited the Plain-Belly Sneetches They left them out cold, in the dark of the beaches. They kept them away. Never let them come near. And that's how they treated them year after year.*

Dr. Seuss points out how silly it is to exclude people who are different. We all have strengths and weaknesses that differ from the strengths and weaknesses of those around us. Tolerance is looking past another's weakness in order to appreciate the strengths. In business, some leaders prefer to

surround themselves with "Yes, men", individuals who see things as they do and are not likely to disagree. A stronger leader will choose to have different thinkers in their inner circle in order to broaden their vision and possibilities. What do you

think the Declaration of Independence or The United States Constitution would have looked like if only a single

individual had written it? A group all from the same political party, faith group or economic strata? For classroom lessons using The Sneetches go to www.tolerance.org/activity/anti-racism-activity-sneetches

Mix It Up at Lunch

A Mix It Up at Lunch event is a simple call to action: take a new seat in the cafeteria. By making the move, students can cross the invisible lines of school division, meet new people and make new friends.

This is a great activity that can be planned, organized and executed by the students. Be sure to have time in the classroom afterwards for the students to process the activity to receive the full benefit of exercise.



This event can go beyond a simple lunch time change. Visit the website www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/lunch-day and you will find ideas from other schools and many other lessons teaching tolerance.



Go to the Root

Tolerance comes from the Latin verb *tolerare* which means "to bear". Tolerance is the ability to bear a difficult situation with a good attitude. Tolerance appears in many industries. In medicine it may refer to how well our bodies tolerate a drug or procedure. In mechanics, tolerance may mean an allowance of deviation from a standard.



“Acceptance is not submission; it is acknowledgement of the facts of a situation. Then deciding what you're going to do about it.”

Kathleen Casey Theisen

“In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher.”

Dalai Lama

“The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority.”

Ralph W. Sockman

“We should not permit tolerance to degenerate into indifference.”

Margaret Chase Smith

“There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it behooves all of us not to talk about the rest of us.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

“I used to think anyone doing anything weird was weird. Now I know that it is the people that call others weird that are weird.”

Paul McCartney

“I would never belong to a group that would accept someone like me as a member.”

Groucho Marx:

Character Quotables

“Ultimately, America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired.”

Robert F. Kennedy:

“The price of the democratic way of life is a growing appreciation of people's differences, not merely as tolerable, but as the essence of a rich and rewarding human experience.”

Jerome Nathanson:

“Tolerance is a great trait to contain, but so is the ability to shut up.”

Source unknown

“Tolerance consists of seeing certain things with your heart instead of your eyes.”

Orlando A. Battista

“Getting a dog is like getting married. It teaches you to be less self-centered, to accept sudden, surprising outbursts of affection, and not to be upset by a few scratches on your car.”

Will Stanton:

“Tolerance comes with age. I see no fault committed that I myself could not have committed at some time or other.”

Goethe

“Tolerance is the positive and cordial effort to understand another's beliefs, practices, and habits without necessarily sharing them.”

Joshua L. Leibman

“Don't stare.”

Mom

Curriculum Connection Science



We walk all over it, sit on it, drive on it and it still bounces back! GRASS! Do you ever consider how much abuse it takes and yet it still manages to bounce back straight and tall? This is the object lesson for tolerance – valuing others keeps us from getting bent out of shape by the faults (or perceived faults) of those around us. The secret of the tolerance of grass is *turgor pressure*.

Spielberg - Hero of Tolerance

Steven Spielberg, an American film director, screenwriter, and film producer has had a successful career span over 4 decades and center on many themes and genres over that time. He began with science-fiction and adventure films and in his later years, his films began addressing such issues as the Holocaust, slavery, war and terrorism.



Spielberg won the Academy Award for Best Director for *Schindler's List* (1993). The movie was based on the true story of Oskar Schindler, a man who risked his life to save 1,100 Jews from the Holocaust. Its themes include intolerance, bigotry and hatred

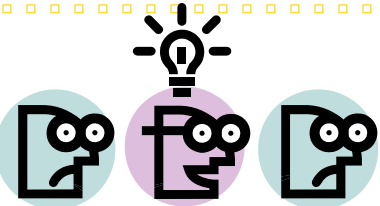
In an interview with Katie Couric on the Today Show on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the film, Spielberg says, "I hope I could look back some day and say, 'gee, there was something else I

did that was equally as important,' but up to this point in my life, it's the most important use of film in my entire experience of living in film all these years."

Following the movie's release Spielberg created the Shoah Foundation, to honor and remember the victims of the Holocaust. The Shoah Foundation, collected testimonies from 52,000 survivors -- their memories of their lives before, during and after those darkest times.

OUTBURST

This activity is based on the game Outburst where a team is given a topic (such as foods that are brown, 4 legged animals, breakfast cereals, TV shows, etc) and in 60 seconds they all shout out as many examples as they can in an attempt to match a pre-determined list. To use it in a classroom setting, start out by announcing a category and having each student write down their responses individually. Rather than match a list you could count the number each has. (Graphing or averaging the counts would add a math connection.) You may want to do this for several categories. Next, put the students in



small groups who will work together on a common list. You can repeat the categories or choose new ones. Now that they have the idea you can actually play a few rounds of the game to add more energy to the lesson. To process this activity compare the number of answers when working alone to working together. By discussing the topic with others, you benefit from their answers based on their experiences and you may be able to think of more answers yourself based on their answers. Point out that we can all benefit from the different experiences of others and to value this difference.

Irish Rain



Explain that in honor of the first day of spring to arrive this month and to celebrate St. Patrick's Day (and it always rains in Ireland) you are going to make it rain inside. Stand in front of the seated classroom. It is important that no one speak during this activity to get the full effect of the rainstorm. Stand at one end of the classroom. Explain that they are to copy your action when you stand in

front of their row, area, table etc. (It isn't necessary to walk around the room, just pace back and forth in front.) Start by rubbing your hands together. Walk from one side of the room to the other until everyone is rubbing their hands together. Everyone should continue to rub their hands until you give them the next action. Go back to where you started and begin snapping your fingers. On your next pass begin making a loud pattering sound by slapping your thighs. Optional: the height of the rainstorm is stomping feet. If this would be too much to control or too loud for your environment you may want to skip this step. Now it is time for the storm to subside. If

you added the stomping feet, go back to the slapping thighs the same way you started each action. Then take everyone back to snapping fingers and then rubbing hands. Now it is time for the storm to end. Make the signal to be quiet as you walk across the room and slowly stop the hands from rubbing. Did it sound like rain in your classroom? How would this storm have sounded if everyone had the exact same kind of snap? The variations within each of us is what give this storm its depth. It needs a large group in order for the sounds to mix properly. A select few could not have made storm alone.

EVERYBODY COUNTS!



A Discussion of Tolerance would not be complete without an activity that includes disabilities. The Everybody Counts program which seeks to give students in grades K - 8 an understanding of disabilities, is being used in many local schools. For those without such a program, there are many activities that can be used to provide this understanding and acceptance.

A internet search on diversity activities or teaching about disabilities will yield many choices for classroom use. A good site for students with -- and without -- physical disabilities is Plane Math (www.planemath.com/planemathmain.html) This Internet-Based Curriculum on Math and Aeronautics for Children With Physical Disabilities site was developed in cooperation with NASA. It is designed to provide students in grades 4 and above with mathematics-based activities that don't require manipulative materials -- and are therefore accessible for people with physical limitations -- and that increase awareness of career opportunities in aeronautics. How cool is that for a student with disabilities to aspire to be a rocket scientist!

For information on the Everybody Counts program visit www.everybodycounts.net

Robin's Reading List

Different Just Like Me by Lori Mitchell (Pre - Grade 2) As April rides a bus with two children who communicate using sign language, watches a blind woman reading Braille numbers next to an elevator, and washes her hands in a restroom next to a woman in a wheelchair, she decides that people are different from one another in some ways, but mostly they are the same. The author gives other examples of how people are the same yet different.

Since We're Friends: An Autism Picture Book by Celeste Shally (Pre - Grade 2) Since We're Friends is about two boys. Matt has autism, the other boy does not. Matt's autism is addressed directly. The boys are drawn as cartoon characters: one is black, one is white. Matt's expressions change with his mood, but generally both boys are smiling. The message is that it is important for normally functioning children to befriend those with disabilities. One child can make a huge difference in the life of a child with autism by offering understanding, friendship and compassion.

The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler (Pre - Grade 2) Human diversity is addressed cheerfully in this picture book that focuses on the skin. Rhyming verses describe the many experiences that can be had in it..."The skin you have fun

in ;
the
skin
that

you run in; the skin that you hop in; etc. The poem ends by emphasizing the importance of the "You who's within" explaining that skin is something that makes individuals different and alike at the same time. Differences in appearances of the children include skin color, hairstyles, freckles, etc. It's a great book for dealing with self-esteem and multiculturalism.

Hooway for Wodney Wat by Helen Lester (Pre - Grade 2) Poor Rodney Rat is teased mercilessly by the other rodents because he can't pronounce his R's. Everyone is afraid when Camilla joins the class and announces that she is meaner, bigger, and smarter than any of the other rodents. One day Rodney outsmarts Camilla in a game of Simon Says, and saves his classmates and himself from the big bully Camilla. This book reflects Rodney's transformation from shy rodent with a speech impediment to hero of the class.

There's A Skunk in My Bunk: Helping Children Learn Tolerance (Let's Talk) by Joseph T. McCann (Pre - Grade 3) On a cold autumn night, a young boy discovers a shivering skunk in his bunk. He is horrified and orders him out of his house as skunks are nasty, smelly creatures! The frightened skunk finds the courage to stand his ground, defending himself and others like him. As these two become friends, the boy learns that he must think for himself, and not prejudge others. This funny tale of tolerance for others identifies and discourages stereotypic thinking in children.

Grace for President by Kelly DiPucchio (K-3) After Grace notices that all U.S. presidents have been men, she begins her campaign to become the first female president by running in her school election. This picture book offers a clear explanation of the Electoral College and how votes by individuals translate to electoral votes. It is intended for ages 5-9, but could be used with older students. The intended message is "the best person for the job" is a great springboard for class discussion on sexism and racism in politics, and the tolerance therein.

Boycott Blues: How Rosa Parks Inspired a Nation (Grade 3-5) Boycott Blues is a sophisticated depiction of the 1955 Civil Rights movement in Montgomery, Alabama. Using the imagery of a hound dog as the oppressed Southerner and Jim Crow as the evil aspect of segregation, this story is told using blues rhythm as the backdrop.

Corner Kick by Bill Swan (Grades 3-6) Michael Strike is captain of both the soccer and chess teams. He has his eye on fellow soccer player and overachiever, Miriah, who is the founder of the youth organization called War Orphans of the World. Zahir Jamiat, who recently moved from the Middle East, has been befriended by Miriah. Michael views Zahir as a threat. When he is finally able to confront Zahir, he realizes that they have more in common than he originally thought. Corner Kick is a much needed book of tolerance and friendship, touching on prejudice, racism, being a team player, and volunteerism.

Frankenstein: With a Discussion of Tolerance (Values in Action Illustrated Classics) by D.J. Arneson, Mary Shelley (Grades 3-6)



Robin's Reading List (continued)



How Tia Lola Came to Stay

by Julia Alvarez (Grades 4-up) This story is about little sister, Juanita, and 9 year old Miguel (soon to be 10) going through major changes in their life. They just moved from a small town in Vermont from New York City because their parents are getting divorced. Miguel is the only Latino in his class, and he misses his father. Tia Lola, their aunt from the Dominican Republic, is coming to take care of them while they get settled. She speaks no English, and Miguel and Juanita speak very little Spanish. The book deals with divorce, family dynamics, moving, learning to fit in. This is a great book for discussions!

Autumn Street by Lois Lowry (Grades 4-up) Elizabeth has come with her sister and pregnant mother to live with her grandparents in Philadelphia while her father is serving in WWII. The grandparents are of wealth and respect in the community. Tatie, the black maid of the household is her rock during this time, and Tatie's son, Charles, is Elizabeth's best friend. The next door neighbors are viewed with suspicion due to their German heritage. There is racial prejudice and even murder in this book.

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli

(Grades 4-up) This book is about Jeffrey Lionel Magee, also known as Maniac Magee and about the people and the town of Two Mills. Jeffrey's parents were killed in an accident when he was three, and lived with his bizarre Aunt Dot

and Uncle Dan for the next eight years. They hated each other, but refused to divorce, so they lived in the same house but didn't speak to each other. Jeffrey was the go-between. Eventually he runs away, searching for a place to belong. He somewhat succeeds when he forces Blacks and Whites to know each other. Maniac Magee expresses prejudice, love, understanding, and fear. A Thousand Never Evers by Shana Burg (Grades 5-8) This novel is set in Mississippi in 1963, and is narrated by a young African American girl. It spotlights the racial injustices that were commonplace during the Civil Rights movement. Addie Ann Pickett's father is dead, her older brother is missing, and her uncle is about to be lynched for a crime he didn't commit. Addie must find the courage to fight for what is right.

Running on Dreams by Herb Heiman

(Grades 5-8) This book is about two middle school boys searching to discover where they fit in the world while trying to find friendship. Brad, the school track star and all around cool-guy, gets assigned to Justin, a 15-year-old boy with autism, who is starting his first semester in a main-stream school. Together they try to understand each other and themselves. It is an excellent introduction to what it feels like to have P.D.D. (Pervasive Developmental Disorder), and how we are all more alike than different.

Us and Them: a History of Intolerance in America by Jim Carnes

(Grades 7-12) Intolerance is the same through the centuries, even in a country

that draws its strength from diversity. In this

excellent book, each chapter focuses in depth on one individual's experience, or on a particular episode of bigotry. The accounts are grim, and readers are asked to think about what happened to ordinary people and to connect the episode with prejudice throughout our history and right now.

The Land by Mildred B. Taylor (Grades 9-up) The Land is the prequel to Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Both stories tell that life is not fair, hard work doesn't always pay off, and the good guy doesn't always win. In this book, Paul Edward-Logan, the son of a white plantation-owner father, and a slave mother, is the narrator, bound and determined to buy his own land and shape his future at all cost. It is devastating for him to be caught between black and white worlds, not fitting in with either one. His strength is in his love of family, friendship, and growing up, regardless of the terrible odds. This book is essential in understanding what led up to the Civil Rights Movement in America.

Love My Enemy by Kate MacLachlan (Young adult) This book is set in Belfast divided by religious bigotry, a pair of star-crossed lovers, one a Protestant, the other Catholic, become victims of petty hatreds and jealousies of the people around them. Passions come to a head and Conor is beaten up, and Zee pays for her "disloyalties" in a dramatic and violent conclusion.

Teacher's Resource: A Parent/Teacher Guide to Children's Books on Peace and Tolerance by Bob Blumenthal

Over 500 titles and annotations from preschool through high school are included in this parent/teacher guide.

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Croskey's Corner

Have you ever read Frindle, Andrew Clements' children's novel? It is the story of a student, Nick, and his teacher, Mrs. Granger. Nick is one of those kids who would probably best be called "gifted," whether he would qualify under official guidelines. Mrs. Granger, in a move intended to teach Nick about the development of language, assigns him to deliver a report on how words come to be associated with their definitions. Nick's research leads him to "decide" that a made up word, *frindle*, means "pen (the writing tool)." Mrs. Granger insists that one person cannot just decide that a word has a particular meaning. Nick attempts to prove her wrong by leading an intellectual revolt in the school. Mrs. Granger opposes Nick all the way, handing out hundreds of after-school detentions to those who use the word, calling Nick's parents in for a conference, and enlisting the help of the administration to stop this movement. And, Mrs. Granger refuses to use the word *frindle*, though it eventually ends up as an official entry in a dictionary. By the time the school year has ended, most students are using the word *frindle* to mean "pen." Nick feels as if he has won. In the midst of the word campaign, Mrs. Granger has written Nick a letter, sealed and dated it, and has told him she will eventually deliver it to him. Many years later, Nick receives the letter, as well as praise from Mrs. Granger that he has indeed invented a new word. In her letter, Mrs. Granger tells Nick that, though she willingly played the "villain" in their conflict, she had been rooting for him to succeed all along. It was as if she fought him as hard as she could, knowing that Nick had to have a strong adversary, an authority figure, to push up against. Still, she had always hoped he would triumph, and he did.

Though this book was written for elementary school children, I often have graduate students in education read it. Indeed, one of the best principals I ever knew had his new teachers read it. I believe the book acknowledges that often students need to have the unflinching support of their teachers. But it also points out that sometimes students need opposition from their teachers. That is an idea that seems counter intuitive to the notion of teaching. Maybe when students push, teachers sometimes have to push back - firmly, gently, but without giving in. By comparison, when humans are in situations which offer no clear boundaries or sign of what the outcome will be, they feel like they would in a pitch black room. The survival instinct likely will lead such people to find a wall, because if they can push against something solid, then they will start to get their bearings. And so, when students enter unfamiliar learning territory, where the boundaries or guidelines are unclear, it may help them to have someone (a teacher) to "push" up against in order to get their bearings.

What about the March Character Quality, Tolerance? One of the "I will" statements is that I will look for ways to help others to mature. Mrs. Granger shows great talent for helping students, Nick in particular, to mature. She does it, not by agreeing with him, but by resisting his efforts. In turn, he pushes back, makes great progress, and succeeds beyond his expectations.

Some teachers are especially good at providing this kind of Tolerance. Did you ever have such a teacher, who, for some difficult class, was the "brick wall" that you ran into? Maybe you had "coasted" some in school up to that time. But this teacher really made you work! In fact, maybe you really buckled down, gave your best effort, and the best you got was a "B!" But that teacher, and the course, took you to a new level as a student. The process was uncomfortable. And it may have left you with a bad taste in your mouth for your "Mrs. Granger." Yet you came out of it feeling as if you had grown. I can tolerate that kind of Tolerance in school. It means that we respect our students so much that we are willing to push them- to their faces as well as from behind - to do more than they have ever done before.

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Character...It Starts With Me!

Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.