

**Lesson:
Diversity**

**Length of lesson:
45 Minutes**

Materials:

- **Board or Large Paper**
- **Pictures of people of varying ages, races, sizes, abilities, religions, etc.**
- **Pictures and stories of discriminatory treatment**
- **Paper**
- **Pens and Pencils**
- **Poster Paper**
- **General Craft Supplies**

Discussion Summary:

Diversity means difference. There is great diversity amongst human beings that enriches our societies, communities, and lives as individuals. Child development research has revealed children begin to

conceptualize gender, racial, and ability differences and begin to show signs of influence by societal norms and biases within their third year of life (Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force 2); it is essential that anti-bias lessons begin at young ages so young people grow up to be accepting, respectful, and compassionate. Teaching young people to appreciate diversity in race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, and size reduces prejudice and hate and promotes tolerance, respect, and peace.

1. Ask participants to sit in a circle. Explain that today you will be talking about diversity, or things that make everyone different and unique.

2. Begin a discussion about diversity. Go around the circle and ask participants to give examples of ways people are different. Record their ideas as they give them. Encourage them to look for examples of diversity in the Girls Only! space, as well as think about examples of diversity at their schools, homes, and in the world. Remind them to think in general terms: if they say, "I am 10 years old and she is 12 years old" that would be a diversity of age. Categories of diversity include: appearance, age, race, gender, social class, religion/beliefs,

language, physical and mental ability, height, weight, size, nationality, educational background, family structure, sexual orientation, personal qualities/personalities, likes and dislikes, and feelings.

3. Remind participants that although people differ in many ways, all people have feelings, can think and learn, want to feel wanted, enjoy life, and have friends.

4. Go around the circle and ask participants to give examples of how they are similar to each other. Categories of similarities can be the same as categories of diversity, as well as more

specific things unique to the participants. Examples include: “we’re in Girls Only!,” “we go to the same school,” “we both have moms who are nurses,” “the three of us play basketball.”

5. Continue the discussion about diversity. Ask participants: What does it mean to you that we live in a diverse world? Do you think our differences should separate us? How do we all benefit from diversity? Record their ideas as they give them.

6. Explain that living in a diverse world means we get to learn new ways of doing things, develop friendships, and use everyone’s unique knowledge and talents.

7. Begin a discussion about discrimination. Explain that sometimes people are discriminated against, or treated unfairly, because of their differences. Give examples and show pictures of discrimination. For each example, ask participants if they think this different treatment is fair and why or why not. Examples include:

- Segregation of blacks and whites in education, housing, buses, voting, drinking fountains, restaurants, etc. until the 1960s
- Banning women from voting until 1920s
- Banning gays and lesbians from getting married
- Airlines making someone purchase two airplane seats because of their body size
- At the airport security checkpoint, only searching people who wear head scarves
- Hurting or killing someone because they are Asian, black, Hispanic, white, a woman, gay or lesbian, a certain religion, etc.
- Only putting stairs in a building so someone in a wheelchair cannot go in
- Telling jokes about another race
- Calling someone a name that puts down their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

8. Ask participants: Have you ever been discriminated against? How do you think it makes someone feel to be discriminated against? Explain that being discriminated against makes people feel angry, sad, or lonely.

9. Remind participants of all the similarities they found amongst each other and all the benefits they get from diversity. Remind them how it feels to be discriminated against.

10. Introduce the Diversity Action Project. Explain that participants will have a chance to think of and brainstorm creative ways to promote diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and peace and challenge discriminatory behavior. Participants can work by themselves or in groups.

11. Have participants think of what aspect of diversity their project will be about. Topics can be as general or specific as participants want. Examples include

- *Age*
- *Race*
- *Gender*
- *Social class*
- *Religion/beliefs*
- *Language*
- *Physical and mental ability*
- *Height*
- *Weight*
- *Size*
- *Nationality*
- *Educational background*
- *Family structure*
- *Sexual orientation*
- *Personal qualities/personalities*
- *Likes and dislikes*
- *Feelings*
- *Animals*
- *The Environment*
- *Children*
- *Senior citizens*

12. Have participants think of what their Diversity Action Project will be. Examples include:

- *Write a poem*
- *Write a song*
- *Write and illustrate a children's book*
- *Make a poster*
- *Make a painting*
- *Make a collage*
- *Make a sculpture*
- *Make a skit*
- *Dress in a different culture's clothes for the day*
- *Teach a class about diversity*
- *Organize a volunteer service project*
- *Learn a new language*
- *Write five possible responses to discriminatory language*
- *Learn how to cook a meal from another culture*
- *Make up a game to teach people about diversity*

13. Give participants time to create their diversity action project. Assist as necessary.

14. Have participants present their Diversity Action Project to the whole group. For each presentation they should tell the purpose of their project, what it is, and how it promotes diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and peace. An example of a Diversity Action Project could be a poem about being told “you _____ like a girl” (in a negative sense) and how it made the person feel to be told that in an insulting way when they are a girl. Another example of a Diversity Action Project could be making a skit about a group of kids who don’t let a girl who is Asian play on their team at recess because they don’t think she is good at sports, how it makes her feel, and how they all become great friends and a strong team after deciding to give her a chance.