

Room for All

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GRADE LEVELS 6-8th grade

TIME ALLOTMENT One class period - 55 minutes

OVERVIEW – As part of Virginia’s Character Education Project, students are taught five basic character traits. These traits include: trustworthiness, loyalty, responsibility, fairness and citizenship. This lesson looks at the issue of fairness and diversity, focusing on situations in students’ lives where compromise and inclusiveness are demanded.

SUBJECT MATTER –Character Education (conflict resolution, cultural diversity)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES – students will use conflict resolution skills to deal with issues relating to differing physical, ethnic, religious, gender, economic or social differences.

STANDARDS

The objectives will in part meet each of the following National or State Standards.

National Character Education Quality Standard 6.2 The school implements a wide range of strategies to accommodate the diverse cultures, skills, interests, and needs of students. Standards can be found at <http://character.org/files/QualityStandards.pdf>

Virginia Character Education Project SB 817 states that the basic character traits taught may include: trustworthiness, loyalty, responsibility, fairness and citizenship. This may be located at <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/CEP/criteria.html>

MEDIA COMPONENTS

Streaming Video:

United Streaming: *America at Its Best: America: A Land of Many People* available from www.unitedstreaming.com

Video:

Character Education Series (Middle School) Episode #2, “Respect for Differences”, Available from BRPTV. Sunburst Media (2002)

MATERIALS

For the teacher:

- VCR
- Computer with projection capacity
- Microsoft Office program – Excel or similar spreadsheet program
- Board or a surface to record responses on.

For the students:

- Situation paper – one for each group of 4 or 5 participants.
- Diversity Checklist – one for each participant

PREP FOR TEACHERS

Download from www.unitedstreaming.com *America at Its Best: America: A Land of Many People*. Have it set up and ready to play.

Prepare the Excel spreadsheet for the graphing activity. Lock in the data to prevent mishap. Practice making graphs prior to the lesson.

Put the video, *Character Education Series # 2*, “Respect for Differences” into the VCR.

Make a copy for each student of the diversity checklist.

Make copies of the Situation paper, one for each group of 4 or 5 persons.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: SETTING THE STAGE

(Set the video, *Character Education Series # 2*, “Repect for Differences”. The segment begins immediately at the beginning of the video. You will stop after the boy puts his fork into the food... approximately 1:12)

Say “Today we are going to look at how differences between people sometimes cause conflict. I am going to show you a short video clip.” **Focus for media interaction, say**, “As you watch the clip, determine why the boys are ridiculing the boy walking by? And how does their ridicule affect him at the lunch table?”

Watch segment stopping when the boy puts his fork into the food.

Ask: “Why did those boys ridicule the boy walking by?” (Answer – he was wearing clothes that were different) **Ask:** “How did their ridicule affect him at the lunch table?” (Answer – he felt uncomfortable and lost self-confidence. He left the table and lost his appetite)

Say: “People are different in many ways. Let’s brainstorm a list of ways that people are different.”

Put responses on the board.

Say: “Some differences are more important to people than others. Here is a list of some differences among people. Select the three things that you think are the most important differences to the people in your school. Put a check in front of those three.”

Pass out the diversity checklist to each participant
After giving them a minute or two to determine their answers, collect the cards.
Using Excel, collect and record the data and then turn it into a graph.

Say: “What does the graph tell us? Why do you think these particular differences affect people more than the others?” (Let participants respond orally)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity One

Set the United Streaming video, *America at Its Best*...available from www.unitedstreaming.com to start at 3:42. You will stop it at 4:12.

Say: “We live in a country that is incredibly diverse.” **Focus for Media Interaction, say,** “After you watch this video clip, please be able to state why the United States is so diverse.”

Watch clip, stopping at 4:12.

Ask: “Why is the United States so diverse?” (Answer - Americans come from many different countries, each bringing their own customs, food, holidays, religions)

Forward the United Streaming video, *America at Its Best*...available from www.unitedstreaming.com to start at 5:55 .You will stop it at 6:36.

Say: “The founders of this country had come from countries where differences had created numerous conflicts and problems.”

Focus for Media Interaction, Say “As you watch this next video clip, be able to state what document gave Americans certain personal legal rights.”

Watch clip, stopping at 6:36.

Ask: “What document gave Americans certain personal legal rights?” (Answer – the Bill of Rights)

Forward the United Streaming video, *America at Its Best*...available from www.unitedstreaming.com to start at 6:36 and you will stop it at 7:53.

Say: “What do you think are some of the rights listed in the Bill of Rights?” **Focus for Media Interaction, say,** “As you watch this video clip, be able to state three main rights that all Americans enjoy.”

Watch clip, stopping at 7:53.

Ask: “What are three main rights that all Americans enjoy?” (Answer – speech, religion, press)

Forward the United Streaming video, *America at Its Best*...available from www.unitedstreaming.com to start at 8:31 .You will stop it at 8:44.

Say: “Legal rights do not guarantee peaceful co-existence in a diverse culture.” **Focus for Media Interaction, say,** “As you watch this video clip, be able to state the three things people must do in order to resolve diversity conflict. “

Watch clip, stopping at 8:44.

Ask: “What are the three things people must do in order to resolve diversity conflict?” (Answer – listen, understand, compromise)

Forward the United Streaming video, *America at Its Best*...available from www.unitedstreaming.com to 8:44. You will stop it at 11:00.

Say: “Large groups of people act in many ways as individuals.” **Focus for Media Interaction, say,** “As you watch this video clip, be able to state what compromise the two boys made and what each gave and got from the compromise. “

Watch clip, stopping at 11:00.

Ask: “What compromise did the two boys make?” (Answer – the trains would be restricted to a certain section of the room.) “What did each boy give up?” (Answer – one boy did not get to keep the entire room free of trains and his brother did not get to cover the entire room with trains.)

Activity Two

(Set the video, *Character Education Series # 2*, “Repect for Differences”. The segment begins at approximately 1:52. Pause it at approximately 2:28. Visual clue to pause – girls walk away from the locker)

Say: “In each of the upcoming segments, one or more students are exhibiting a difference that they possess.” **Focus for Media Interaction, say,** “Be able to describe their difference and how they are being treated.”

Watch segment and pause when the girls walk away from locker.

Ask: “What did you observe in this segment?” (Answer - In this segment two girls are talking about a third girl and her problems in math. When the third girl joins them they are supportive of both her strengths and weaknesses.)

(Set the video, *Character Education Series # 2*, “Repect for Differences”. The segment begins at approximately 3:30. Pause it at approximately 4:30. Visual clue to pause – girl walks away to meet her mother)

Focus for Media Interaction, say, “Here is another video clip. Watch for the other students’ reactions as well as the reaction of the young girl. “

Watch segment, pausing at approximately 4:30.

Ask: “What did you observe in this segment?” (Answer - student is in the wheelchair, some students avoid eye contact, other students stare, one girl sees past the wheelchair to engage the girl in a conversation)

(Set the video, *Character Education Series # 2*, “Repect for Differences. The segment begins at approximately 5:32. Pause it at approximately 6:10. Audio clue to pause – boy says, “I’ll take that as a compliment.”)

Focus for Media Interaction, say, “Here is another video clip. Listen carefully for the boy who is making comments and how his word choice is very personal.”

Watch segment, pausing when the boy says “...as a compliment.”

Ask: “What did you observe?” (Answer - different students celebrate different holidays in December. One boy comments, “Everyone celebrates Christmas”. Another student defends a more diverse position and tells the first boy to “...get a grip “.)

(Set the video, *Character Education Series # 2*, “Repect for Differences”. The segment begins at approximately 6:29. Pause it at approximately 7:07. Visual clue to pause – girls leave the park)

Focus for Media Interaction, say, “In this clip watch for some of the positive ways the participants are negotiating a solution.”

Watch segment, pausing when the girls leave the park.

Ask: “What happened in this clip?” (Answer – a group of girls want to go out to eat together but one of the students practices Hinduism and doesn’t eat meat. The girls offer different compromises so that they can all be together.)

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Divide the participants into small groups of three or four. Each group is given a situation worksheet. Their task is to work together to achieve one group decision per situation. Groups will share their decisions at the conclusion of work time.

OR

Alternative activity – Each group will be given one of the situations. They must work together to perform the situation for the entire group. The whole group must then find consensus for a solution.

**Teachers should shorten the number of situations to adjust for their own time frame.

CROSS-CURRICULAR EXTENSIONS

Social Studies

Students can further study the issue of prejudice and diversity by watching the video, “A Class Divided” which is available at

<http://www.pbs.org/wqbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/>

This video chronicles the story of a teacher who conducted a famous exercise in prejudice in her elementary classroom almost 30 years ago and the resulting reaction from the students and the community. The teacher went on to spend her life conducting seminars on confronting prejudice. This Frontline video site includes teaching materials and supporting information.

Have your students research the results of North American colonization on the native peoples of the continent. In particular, research the effects on both cultures as they interact with each other.

English

Students can develop papers, presentations or debates concerning any of the social inequalities that have been raised as a result of this activity.

Novels, which deal with prejudice or dealing with differences, are available for teens. These might include: *The Giver*, *The Gathering Blue*, *Number the Stars*, *Fredrick*, *Roll of Thunder*, *Hear My Cry*, *Souder*, *The Outsiders*

Possible web sites for further study:

Affirmative Action and Diversity page - <http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/>

Multicultural Review <http://www.mcreview.com/>

Multicultural Resources for children <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/multipub.htm>

Multicultural Links <http://www.isomedia.com/homes/jmele/mcultlink.html>

**** Excellent Resource

Building Community and Combating Hate: Lessons for the Middle School Classroom
<http://www.partnersagainsthate.com/>

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Invite a speaker from one of the local organizations that promotes understanding and acceptance to come and speak to your students. Other choices could be speakers from different ethnic or religious groups.

Invite a lawyer to speak to your classroom concerning the legal issues of diversity in the workplace and in society.

Diversity Checklist

Choose three differences that you think people in your school consider most important when dealing with other kids.

_____ **Ethnicity**- where the people or their families originally came from.

_____ **Gender**- whether they are male or female

_____ **Age**- how old a person is

_____ **Income level** – how much money they have

_____ **Physical make up** – body size and shape

_____ **Physical and mental limitations** – physically

challenged or mentally challenged

_____ **Religion** – what religion people practice or whether they

practice a religion at all

Situation Worksheet

For each situation, work as a group to reach consensus and record your decision on this sheet.

Situation one.

You and 3 other students are responsible for choosing the date for the class field trip. The day that has been suggested works well except that it falls on a Jewish holiday. This means that none of those students could attend. This would only affect 5 students out of 100 students. However, if you choose a different date, at least 20 of the other students would be unable to attend. What do you decide?

Situation two.

A liver has become available for transplant. There are four candidates for the transplant: a mother with two young children, a famous heart surgeon, and a man who is a recovering alcoholic, young male in his early twenties. Only one can receive the liver and those that are not chosen may not live to have another chance. Who gets the transplant?

Situation three

The choir is choosing music for the spring performance. The choir will also be performing this music at a competition against other schools. Some of the members of the group want to choose music that is more in line with their ethnic heritage. Other members don't want to perform it because they don't think it will be very popular with the judges and could cause them to lose.

Situation four

There are two finalists for a job. One finalist is from a minority background. Both of them have excellent credentials and neither one is more qualified than the other. Some members of the selection committee have suggested giving it to the minority candidate because a minority candidate has never been chosen. Who gets the job?