More Diversity Activities for Youth and Adults

PENNSTATE

1855

College of Agricultural Sciences
Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension

Introduction

Why is appreciating diversity important for youth and adults?

The face of the United States and its workplace is changing. A growing number of neighborhoods and communities contain a complex mix of races, cultures, languages, and religious affiliations. At the same time, the widening gap between the rich and the poor is creating greater social class diversity. In addition, the U.S. population includes more than 43 million people with physical and mental challenges.

For these reasons, today's youth and adults are more likely to face the challenges of interacting and working with people different from themselves. The ability to relate well to all types of people in the workplace is a leadership skill that is becoming increasingly important. Understanding, accepting, and valuing diverse backgrounds can help young people and adults thrive in this ever-changing society.

How can these activities boost understanding of diversity?

Learning about diversity can be fun. The activities in this publication can help participants:

- Recognize how we place self-imposed limits on the way we think.
- Discover that, in many ways, people from different cultures and backgrounds hold similar values and beliefs.
- Become more aware of our own cultural viewpoints and the stereotypes we may have inadvertently picked up.
- Accept and respect the differences and similarities in people.

When and where should these activities be used?

The activities in this publication are appropriate for use by teachers, youth leaders, and child care professionals. While most of the activities are appropriate for older youth (middle school and above) and adults, some of the activities may be adapted for younger children. Decisions should be based on the facilitator's knowledge of the group's cognitive level and needs.

Some of the activities—including "Complimentary Round Table" and "Chocolate Milk and Shades of Skin Color"—can be used as discussion starters or icebreakers. Others such as "Is That a Fact?" may be the basis for an entire lesson. In either case, the facilitator should allow enough time for discussion at the end of each activity. Debriefing is important for dealing with unresolved feelings or misunderstandings. Conducting activities in an atmosphere of warmth, trust, and acceptance is equally as important.

Potato Activity

Goal
To help youth eliminate stereotyping and recognize the uniqueness of each individual.

Time
20–30 minutes

Materials
A brown paper bag, one potato for each student in the class, and one potato for the teacher

Procedure

Select one potato for your demonstration and have a story in mind to describe your potato to the class. Hold up your potato in front of the class and say, "I have here a potato. I don't know about you, but I've never thought that much about potatoes. I've always taken them for granted. To me, potatoes are all pretty much alike. Sometimes I wonder if potatoes aren't a lot like people."

Pass around the bag of potatoes and ask each student to take one potato. Tell each student to "examine your potatoes, get to know its bumps, scars, and defects and make friends with it for about one minute or so in silence. Get to know your potato well enough to be able to introduce your 'friend' to the group."

After a few minutes, tell students that you'd like to start by introducing your "friend" to them. (Share a story about your potato and how it got its bumps.) Then tell students that the class would like to meet their friends. Ask who will introduce their friend first. (Ask for several, if not all, to tell the group about their potatoes.)

When enough students have introduced their "friends" to the class, take the bag around to each person. Ask them to please put their "friends" back into the bag.

Ask the class, "Would you agree with the statement 'all potatoes are the same'? Why or why not?"

Ask them to try to pick out their "friend." Mix up the potatoes and roll them out onto a table. Ask everyone to come up and pick out their potatoes.

After everyone has their potatoes and you have your "friend" back, say, "Well, perhaps potatoes are a little like people. Sometimes, we lump people of a group all together. When we think, 'They're all alike,' we are really saying that we haven't taken the time or thought it important enough to get to know the person. When we do, we find out everyone is different and special in some way, just like our potato friends."

Discussion

Ask students to think about groups at school or in the community that we tend to lump together. If they have trouble thinking of groups, you may want to prompt them with some of the following groups:

- kids in band
- kids who live in the trailer park
- kids of a certain religion
- kids in the gifted class
- kids in special education classes
- kids from a certain racial or ethnic group
- kids who live in rural settings
- kids who live in the city
- all of the girls
- all of the boys

Use groups that are relevant and meaningful for the school/community you are addressing.

Discuss answers to the following questions:

1. When we lump everyone from the same group together and assume they all have the same characteristics, what are we doing? What is this called?
2. Do you know a lot of people from the groups we tend to lump together? Do they all fit the stereotype?
3. Why are stereotypes dangerous?

Complimentary Round Table

Goal
To enhance social skills development by illustrating how our words affect people.

Time
15 minutes

Materials
Two apples and a knife

Procedure

Seat a group of six to eight participants at a round table. Take one apple, say something mean to it (for example, "I hate you." "I don't want to be around you."), and drop it to the floor. The next person picks up the apple, is mean to it, and drops it. This continues around the table a couple times as everyone takes turns being mean to it and dropping it. Cut that apple in half and lay it in the center of the table, allowing it to brown. Take the other apple and, as each participant takes a turn holding the apple, have everyone else in the group take turns complimenting or affirming the person holding the apple. Continue until everyone in the group has been complimented by everybody else.

Discussion

Lead the participants in a discussion of how being complimented feels. Were compliments easy to receive? Why or why not? Was it easier to be mean or to give compliments? Why?

Ask if anyone wants the brown, battered apple on the table. Of course, no one does. Discuss how a lot of people feel like that apple—all bruised and battered because they've heard mean things all their lives. They feel like no one cares about them and no one wants to be their friend. Explain that our words can make people feel like that apple.

Both youth and adults respond well to this activity. Youth and adults develop social skills as they become more sensitive to the feelings of others.

Reprinted with permission of the author, Rose Guzauskas, of Gastonia.

Unequal Resources

Goal
To examine people's attitudes toward and expectations of people with different economic backgrounds.

Time
30–35 minutes

Materials
Five large ziplock bags with the following art supplies for each of the five groups:

Group 1:
Regular pencils and one colored pencil

Group 2:
Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper

Groups 3 and 4:
Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper, scissors, colored markers, glue.

Group 5:
Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper, scissors, rulers, colored markers, glue, tape, glitter, ribbons, stencils, and anything you can add to help this group

Procedure

Ask participants to form groups with three to five people in each. You want to have five groups. Tell participants that each group will make a poster to celebrate a holiday, season of the year, or other occasion (for example, Mother's Day, spring, fall, or Thanksgiving Day). All groups should make a poster about the same holiday or occasion. Tell them that each group will receive a bag of supplies to use in making their posters. They can use only the supplies given to their group; they may not borrow supplies from other groups. Tell them that their finished posters will be put on display and that they will have 15 or 20 minutes to complete their posters.

Give each group a large sheet of poster paper. Have the bags of supplies in view for all to see. Then give each group one of the bags. Hold up the bag (in an inconspicuous manner) so that all groups see the bag that is being given to each group. You need not comment on the contents of the bag. If participants ask why the contents are different, just say that these are the supplies available for your group. That's the way it is.

Give participants a five-minute warning. When the allotted time is up, ask participants to put their unused supplies back into their bags. One at a time, call each group to come up to the front of the room to display and explain their poster. After each presentation, applaud the group. When all groups have completed their presentations, engage the group in a discussion about this activity.

Discussion

1. How did you feel when you noticed that some people had more materials than you did?
2. How did you feel when you noticed that some people had fewer materials than you did?
3. In what ways did resources affect your project?
4. How would you have felt if I had judged your final products for a prize or for a grade? Would that be fair? Why or why not?
5. If other people saw your posters and were asked to pick the most talented students in the room, whom would they say? Would these posters necessarily be a fair assessment of what all of you can do?
6. Why do you think I set up this activity this way?
7. In what other situations do people have advantages over others? (Provide some examples to prompt the class.)
8. Is it important to consider individual circumstances and opportunities before judging a person's capabilities? Why or why not?

Adapted from: Byrnes, D. A. (1995). "Teacher, They Call Me a _____!" *Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination in the Classroom.* Logan: Utah State Office of Education.

Chocolate Milk and Shades of Skin Colors

Goal
To understand why people have different skin colors.

Time
5–10 minutes

Materials
One glass of white milk, a spoon, a package of powdered chocolate drink mix

Procedure

State that one way people differ is in their skin colors. Ask if anyone knows why people have different skin colors.

Pour a glass of milk and hold it up for the class to see. Ask if anyone in the room has skin as white as the milk in the glass. (The answer should be, "No," unless there is an albino in the class.)

Inform students that this is because all of us have something in our skin called "melanin," which is a black substance.

Hold up the package of chocolate powder. Ask students to pretend the chocolate is melanin. Make the following statements as you add chocolate to the glass:

- White people have a small amount of melanin in their skin. (Put a little chocolate in the glass and stir.)
- Brown people, such as those from India, have more melanin in their skin. (Put more chocolate in the glass and stir.)
- Darker people, such as many African Americans, have even more melanin in their skin. (Put more chocolate in and stir.)

Ask students why we have different amounts of melanin in our skin. Inform then that melanin is like a curtain in our skin—it protects our skin from the sun's rays. We need some sun to help our bodies make and use vitamins, but too much sun will burn our skin. What color we are depends on our ancestry. White people originated in western European parts of the world, where it was colder; that area did not have much bright sunlight. So, people in that area developed skin with less melanin to take advantage of the smaller amount of available sunlight.

People who lived, let's say, in India, where it is hot and had a lot of sunlight, developed skin with more melanin to protect them from too much sun. And people who lived in Africa, where it is very hot, developed skin with even more melanin to protect them from the sun's hot rays.

Ask students which skin color burns faster in the summer sun. The answer is that people with lighter skin burn more and faster than people with darker skin.

Discussion

1. Does the color of people's skin make them good or bad, more intelligent or less intelligent, pretty or ugly?
2. What does the color of a person's skin tell you about the person?

Adapted from: Byrnes, D. A. (1995). "Teacher, They Call Me a _____!" *Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination in the Classroom*. Logan: Utah State Office of Education.

People with Disabilities

Goal
To experience a condition similar to what some people with learning disabilities deal with regularly.

Time
15–20 minutes

Materials
One Reading Sheet for each student

Procedure—Part I

Hand out one Reading Sheet to each student. Ask for volunteers to read the sheet aloud in small sections. After students have struggled with this, read the passages from the answer sheet.

Discussion

Ask students how trying to read this felt.

Tell students that this is an example of what reading might be like for people who have learning disabilities. People who have learning disabilities might have similar feelings to the ones you experienced.

Inform students that experts estimate that 6 to 10 percent of school-aged people in this country have learning disabilities. For people with learning disabilities, reading can be especially difficult, but that does not affect their intelligence. People with learning disabilities have average or above-average intelligence.

Procedure—Part II

Ask students which of the following people has/had a learning disability:

Tom Cruise
Walt Disney
Albert Einstein
George Patton

After they guess, read the description of each of these people. Emphasize that all of these people were very successful despite their learning disabilities.

Celebrities with Disabilities

Tom Cruise
He is a famous movie star. He learns his lines by listening to a tape because he suffers from dyslexia.

Walt Disney
He was slow in school work and did not have a successful school experience but later became a well-known movie producer and cartoonist.

Albert Einstein
As a child, he could not talk until the age of three. He did not learn to read until he was nine. His teachers considered him to be mentally slow, unsociable, and a dreamer. He failed the entrance examination for college. Ultimately, he developed the Theory of Relativity.

George Patton
When he was twelve years old he could not read, and he remained deficient in reading throughout his life. However, he could memorize entire lectures—this was how he got through school. He became a famous general during World War II.

Adapted from: Office of Affirmative Action (1996). *Take a Walk in My Shoes.* Oakland: Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California.

Discussion

1. Should we judge people based on their learning disabilities?
2. Can people with learning disabilities make important contributions to society?
3. Can you think of other famous people who have disabilities?

Answer Sheet for "Reading"

Reading

It is difficult to learn to read when the words don't stand still. Can you imagine what it is like to read when the words and letters move up and down on the page? Reading is not my favorite school activity. It helps to use my finger or a ruler to keep my place so I can read.

Changes

Changes are all around us.
Changes are a part of life.
Changes are a part of growing.

Just look how a sapling becomes a tree.
And in the fall, the leaves turn all different colors.

Red, gold, amber, brown, orange, and yellow.

Even though they're different colors,
They are all part of one tree,
And beautiful together.

And so, too, it is with people.

We are born, and we grow into adults
Who are different, but we are all part of the same family.

If only we could just blend harmoniously
Like the leaves on the tree.
Well, there's still time for change.

—Jane Brucker

R^EA^DING

It is difficult to learn to read when the words don't stand still. Can you imagine what it is like to read when words and letters move up and down on the page? Reading is not my favorite school activity.

It helps to use my finger or a ruler to keep my place so I can read.

CHANGES

Changes are all aronub us,
Changes are a dart of lifg,
Changes are a bart of gromiup.

Just lookat hom a sa blinp dsccmes a tres,
Aub in the fall, the leanse turu all
bifferent colors.

Reb, golb, awder, dromn, oraugs anb yellom.

Even thorgh they're different colors,
Theyar s all dart of ous tres,
Aub dsautifnl togsther.

Aub so too, it is mith psodls,
We are boru, aub me grom intoabu lts
Whoars all diffsrent, put ars all dart
of the sams fawily.

If ouly mscoulb juet dlsnd harmoniouzly
Like the lsanse ou the tres.
Well, thers's still roow forchaugs.

by Jane Brucker

The source of this page was not traceable.

Famous People with Disabilities

Ludwig Van Beethoven, 1770–1827
Famous German composer and considered one of the greatest musicians of all times

The last 30 years of his life were shaped by a series of personal crises, the first of which was the onset of deafness.

Cher, 1946–
American singer and Academy Award–winning actress and director.

Dyslexic

Albert Einstein, 1879–1955
Mathematician and physicist; he developed the Theory of Relativity

He had a learning disability and did not speak until the age of three. He had a difficult time doing math in school and expressing himself through writing.

Whoopee Goldberg, 1949–
Oscar- and Golden Globe Award–winning actress

Dyslexic

Bruce Jenner, 1949–
1976 Olympic Gold Metal Decathlon Champion

Dyslexic

Helen Keller, 1880–1968
Blind and deaf

Juliette Gordon Law, 1860–1927
She had severe hearing loss and was deaf by the time she founded the Girl Scouts of America.

Marlee Matlin, 1965–
1987 Academy Award winner—Best Actress for role in *Children of a Lesser God*

She was the first hearing-impaired actress to win an Oscar.

John Milton, 1608–1674
English author and poet who wrote some of the greatest and longest poems—"Paradise Lost," "Paradise Regained," and "Samson Agonestes"—in his head and dictated them to his daughter.

He went completely blind in 1641.

George Patton, 1885–1945
U.S. General

Learning disabled. Did not learn to read until he was twelve years old; yet, he had learned to read military topographic maps by age seven.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1882–1945
U.S. President four times

Paralyzed by polio

Harriet Tubman, 1820(?)–1913
Abolitionist and rescuer of hundreds of slaves on the Underground Railroad. As a child, she was struck by an overseer. The blow fractured her skull and resulted in narcolepsy.

George Washington, 1732–1799
First U.S. President

He had a learning disability and could barely write; also had very poor grammar skills.

Woodrow Wilson, 1856–1924
U.S. President from 1913 to 1921; also governor, author, professor, and world statesman

Severely dyslexic

Is That a Fact?

Goals
To articulate the difference between fact and opinion and to identify ways to clarify or qualify statements of opinion.

Time
30 minutes

Materials
Sets of Fact/Opinion Statement Cards (see directions below)

Fact/Opinion Statement Cards

Create sets of Fact/Opinion Statement Cards by writing the following statements on blank index cards, one statement per card. Add or substitute statements of your choice.

- Girls are smarter than boys.
- Americans are friendly.
- Some boys are good at sports.
- Utah is a state in the United States.
- The world is a better place now than it was 100 years ago.
- Wheelchair users feel sorry for themselves.
- The Nile is the longest river in the world.
- Women make better teachers than men.
- People with accents are not smart.
- Most people in Africa live in urban areas.
- The United States is the richest country in the world.
- Americans love French fries.
- Some rich people are stuck up.
- There is more farmland in the United States than in any other country.
- Homeless people are lazy.
- In the United States, the sun comes up every day.
- Men are usually taller than women.
- This is the best school in the whole town.
- Judaism is a religion.
- China is the most populous country in the world.
- Most people in Honduras are unhappy.

Introduction

Understanding the difference between fact and opinion is critical to our ability to examine our reactions to events and people. Stereotypes and prejudices are often based on opinions that are perceived as facts.

Procedure

Write three examples of facts on one side of the board and three examples of opinions on the other side of the board

Examples of facts:

- George has blue eyes.
- This room has four windows.
- There are 50 states in the United States.

Examples of opinions:

- This room is too warm.
- Math class is boring.
- The best cars are made in the United States.

Ask participants to identify the statements of fact and the statements of opinion. Label each group.

Have participants work with partners to come up with definitions for the words "fact" and "opinion." Choose a group definition (use a dictionary if necessary).

Divide participants into small groups of four to five people each. Provide each group with a set of Fact/Opinion Statement cards. Ask one person in each group to "deal" the cards out to the group members until all cards have been distributed.

Fact/Opinion Statement Cards

China is the most populous country in the world.	Americans are friendly.	Utah is a state in the United States.
Today is a beautiful day.	Women make better teachers than men.	Judaism is a religion.
Girls are smarter than boys.	Some boys are good at sports.	The United States is the richest country in the world.
Most people in Africa live in urban areas.	Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world.	Some redheads have bad tempers.
Wheelchair users feel sorry for themselves.	Some rich people are stuck up.	Men are usually taller than women.
The world is a better place now than it was 100 years ago.	Most people in Honduras are unhappy.	There is more farmland in the United States than in any other country.
Americans love French fries.	Homeless people are lazy.	This is the best school in the whole town.
The Nile is the longest river in the world.	People with accents are not smart.	The sun comes up every day.

Have each small group divide its work space into three areas, one labeled "Facts," another "Opinions," and the third "Need More Information." Have participants work together to place the statements in the appropriate areas according to the definitions they agreed on earlier.

Ask participants to examine the statements in the "Need More Information" category. Have them work together to identify sources of information that would prove or disprove the statements.

Discussion

When the small groups have completed their work, bring the whole group back together to discuss the process. Use the following questions to check the students' understanding of the difference between fact and opinion.

- How can you tell whether something is a fact or an opinion?
- What makes deciding if something is a fact or an opinion difficult?
- When you were working in small groups, did everyone agree on which statements were fact and which were opinion? Could any of the opinion statements be considered facts if we had more information or if the statements were more specific?
- If you're not sure whether something is a fact, what can you do?
- Why is knowing whether something is a fact or an opinion important?

Used with permission from the Peace Corps, www.peacecorps.gov/wws.

Label Activity

Goal
To experience the effects of inclusion and exclusion in a simulated activity.

Time
15 minutes

Materials
Blank mailing labels or blank name tags, cut in half. Make as many labels as you have students. On the labels, write, "Smile at me," "Say, 'Hi,'" "Pat me on the back," "Shake my hand," "Give me five," and "Give me an "okay" sign." Use other responses that are typical for the group. On 10 percent of the labels, write, "Turn away from me."

Procedure

Begin the lesson by asking students if they think we sometimes label people because they belong to different groups. Tell them that the labels we put on people often limit their participation in groups.

Tell students that you are going to give them each a sticker. Tell them that you will put it on their foreheads so that they cannot see what it says. Distribute the labels randomly. Ask everyone to remain quiet and not reveal to each other what their labels say.

When everyone has a label, ask students to get up and mill around as if they were in the lunch room at school or at a party. Remind them that they should not reveal what is on anyone else's label. Let students mingle for 4 to 5 minutes, then ask them to return to their seats without looking at their labels.

Discussion

Ask students the following questions:

1. How were you feeling?
2. Without looking at your label, do you know what it says? How do you know?
3. All of you who think you have the "Turn away from me" label, please come and stand together in front of the room. How did you feel?

Allow students to look at their labels now. Explain that all of us have experienced times when we felt like we were wearing a "Turn away from me" label —when we felt left out or targeted. However, some groups experience this more than others, even regularly. What are some groups in your school that get targeted or left out? What groups in society seem to have a "Turn away from me" label on them? (Some examples include people with disabilities, people of a different religion, people of a different race, people who speak with an accent, and underprivileged people.)

Remind them that no one said anything negative to them; it was just in our nonverbal communication—our body language and our expressions. Without words, they got the message. Point out that 94 percent of all communication is nonverbal. We need to pay close attention to our body language and nonverbal expressions as well as our words.

End with the following additional questions:

- What can we do to change our nonverbal behavior to help everyone feel included?
- What do people from groups that are left out or excluded sometimes do? (Sometimes they get together and form their own groups and isolate themselves; perhaps this happened during this activity.)
- Any new thoughts about why members of excluded groups act in society the way they do?
- Any new insights on how being in an oppressed group feels?

Adapted from: O'Malley, Marion, and Tiffany Davis (1994). *Dealing with Differences.* Carrboro, N.C.: The Center for Peace Education.

Smile at me.

Pat me on the back.

Give me five.

Say, “Hi.”

Shake my hand.

Give me an “okay” sign.

Turn away from me.

Walk Apart—Walk Together

This activity is appropriate for a wide variety of ages, ranging from elementary school to adult. Since it requires no special materials, it can be conducted in almost any setting. It is a particularly good activity for groups that are just forming.

Goal
To help participants recognize the differences among people, as well as the many similarities people share.

Time
10–15 minutes

Materials
Open space large enough for two people to take a short walk

Procedure

Two "volunteers" come forward and stand with backs together. Ask the "audience" to call out things about these two volunteers that are different. Differences sometimes pull us apart. As each difference is called, the volunteers take one step apart. When they reach the end of the available space, have them turn and face each other. Now, ask the audience to call out similarities of the volunteers. As each similarity is called out, the volunteers take one step toward each other.

Discussion

1. Think about the things that were noted as differences. How many were things that we can easily see (gender, size, hair color, skin color, dress, wearing glasses or not, etc.)?
2. What were some of the similarities? While certain physical characteristics are similar, many other similarities are not so visible. Perhaps both "volunteers" are enthusiastic or both have similar interests or goals in life.
3. Talk about the importance of the differences and of the similarities among members of the group. Be sure to talk about the importance of accepting and welcoming all members into the group.

Adapted from the Scouting Web pages: http://www.epilogsys.com/ScoutingWeb/SubPages/DiversAct.htm. Permission to reprint was granted by Kathie Little, Volunteer Girl Scouts of the Old 96 Council.

Lookism

When the word "diversity" is mentioned, several terms are likely to come to mind. Among these include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, physical and mental abilities, income, education, and sexual orientation. One dimension of diversity that does not always immediately come to mind is appearance. Bias based on appearance may be referred to as "lookism." Consciously or unconsciously, we often make judgments about people based on the way they look.

Goal
To help participants think about the concept of lookism and to identify how appearance affects bias.

Time
Approx. 45 minutes

Materials
Markers and one flipchart for each group

Procedure

Divide the class into small groups (four learners to a group) and issue each group a flipchart and markers. Each group will make two flipcharts—one will be titled "How prejudice and bias focus on the physical characteristics of people" and the other will be titled "How prejudices and bias focus on the dress and makeup of people." Under each title they will list how people are hindered for not meeting a group's or organization's standards (norms). Coach the groups as they work their way through the exercise. Some items that could be listed include:

Physical Characteristics

- Too short
- Overweight
- Too light or too dark
- Too young or too old
- Disfigured
- Not graced with "good looks"
- Features that are less desirable than social or cultural norms

Dress and Makeup

- Dresses out of fashion
- Body piercing
- Hair length
- Informal dress
- Impression of informality
- Expression of cultural, ethnic, religion, generational, or personal standards

After the small groups have worked on the activity for about 25 minutes, bring the groups together and have them present their findings.

Discussion

Discuss what is fair and legitimate to ask of people about physical characteristics and appearance when it comes to workplace norms.

- Ability to do the job
- Loss of customers and money due to how an organization's employees look
- Safety requirements
- Loss of personnel because of bias about appearance

This activity is appropriate for adults and older youth. It can also be adapted so that the discussion focuses on inclusion in school, social groups, and other settings more relevant to the participant group.

Created by Donald R. Clark (nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/appear.html) and reprinted with his permission.

Inclusion/Exclusion

Goal
To experience the frustrations of being left out of a group or being ignored by its members and to explore the factors associated with the behaviors of insiders and outsiders.

Time
15–20 minutes

Materials
One sheet of paper for each group of five or six students; each paper should have a large number on it (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.).

Procedure

Determine the number of students in the group and how many groups you can form with six or seven students in each group.

Begin by telling the group that you will need some volunteers. Select enough volunteers to equal the number of groups you determined earlier. (For example, assume you have 30 students in the class. That would allow for five groups of six students in each group. Therefore, you will need to select five volunteers.)

Ask the class to wait just a minute while you take the volunteers out into the hall. Tell the volunteers that you will be back to give them instructions in a minute.

Return to the large group and ask them to get into groups of five or six participants and form a circle. It is okay if a few groups have a smaller or larger number than five. Tell the students that the goal of each circle is to keep the volunteers from becoming a part of their group. They should pick any subject and talk to each other. The subject may be planning a party or some other special event; each group should appear to be having a good time. The groups can use any means possible, except violence, to keep the volunteer from becoming a part of the group. The group may chose to stand very close together so that the volunteer cannot get into the circle. The group members may simply ignore the volunteers and not talk to them. Give each group a sheet of paper with the number of their group on it.

Leave the larger group to form their circles and select their topics to talk about. Return to the volunteers in the hall. Tell the volunteers that their goal is to become a part of the circle that you will assign them to. Assign a number to each volunteer and remind then that their goal is to become a member of the group with that number. Bring the volunteers into the room and ask the circles to hold up their numbers. Allow the interaction to proceed for about three minutes. Then ask everyone to return to their seats.

Discussion

First, ask everyone to give the volunteers a round of applause for being brave enough to be volunteers for this activity. Thank them. Then lead them in a discussion of this activity. Ask volunteers:

1. How did you feel about being excluded by the group?
2. How hard did you try to become part of the group?
3. What did you do to try to get in?
4. What did the group say or do to you to keep you out?

Ask group members:

1. How did you feel about excluding the volunteer?
2. How far were you willing to go to keep the volunteer out?

Tell them that in this situation they were asked to keep the volunteers out of the group. But in real life people do get excluded from groups and a lot of the time it is because they are thought to be different from people in the group.

- Can you think of a time when you felt different from everyone else? Maybe you were the only girl in a group that had all boys. Or maybe you were the only person who spoke English in a room full of people. Who can share a time when they felt different?
- What is one word that best describes how you felt when you were the one who was different? (Write these on a blank overhead or wall sheet.)
- Have you ever been excluded from some group that you wanted to join? Why did you want to join them, and how did they exclude you?
- Think about some people at your school that you consider different from you or the kids you hang around with. I'm sure everyone can think of at least one person that you think of as being different. Do you have that person in mind? Raise your hand if you have that person in mind. Now, here comes the hard part: Think of at least two ways in which that person is the same as you. (Ask students to share.) So, as you can see, although we are all unique and are in many ways different from everyone else, we are also the same in many ways.
- What is the most important thing you learned from this activity?
- Based on your experience in this activity, would you change any of your behaviors at school?
- How could we make it easier for outsiders to join our group?

Resources/References

The activities in this publication have been adapted from activities in a variety of resources. Information about specific sources will be provided upon request.

Byrnes, D. A. (1995). "Teacher, They Call Me a _____!" *Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination in the Classroom.* Logan: Utah State Office of Education.

Clark, Donald R. (1997–2000). *Big Dog's Leadership Training and Development Outline.* www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadtrn.html

Many Faces, One People: A Multicultural Training Guide (1993). Chevy Chase, Md.: Community CARES project funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation through National 4-H Council and the USDA Extension 4-H program.

Morita, Yuri (1996). *Take a Walk in My Shoes: A Guide Book for Youth on Diversity Awareness Activities.* Oakland: Office of Affirmative Action, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California.

O'Malley, Marion, and Tiffany Davis (1994). *Dealing with Differences.* Carrboro, N.C.: The Center for Peace Education.

Prepared by Patreese D. Ingram, associate professor of agricultural and extension education.

Visit Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences on the Web: www.cas.psu.edu

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research, extension, and resident education programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This publication is available from the Publications Distribution Center, The Pennsylvania State University, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802. For information telephone 814-865-6713.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

© The Pennsylvania State University 2004

Produced by Ag Communications and Marketing

CAT # UI378 R1.5M10/07mpc4692