

9/11 MEMORIAL

UNIT: Community and Conflict

GRADE LEVEL/S: 3-5

TIME NEEDED: 1 session

TEACHER: Nicole Marrero

LESSON TITLE:

TEACHING TOLERANCE: ACCEPTING AND EMBRACING DIFFERENCES

Common Core Standards

RL 2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

W 1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

SL 4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

- What are characteristics that make people different?
- How would you feel in other people's shoes?
- What theme or message is the story teaching us?

Lesson Goals/ Objectives

- Students will identify and appreciate differences and similarities between people.
- Students will understand the meaning of tolerance and how it can be applied to their lives.

Key Terms

Differences, Embrace, Respect, Tolerance

Materials

- Chart paper & markers
- Books teaching tolerance. Some suggested titles:
 - Woodson, Jacqueline. *The Other Side*. (Putnam Juvenile, 2001)
 - Golenbock, Peter. *Teammates*. (Sandpiper, 1992)
 - Winans, Cece, Thomas, Keith, and Love, Alvin. *Colorful World*. (Maren Green Publishing, 2008)
 - Merrifield, Margaret. *Come Sit by Me*. (Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1998)
 - Hoffman, Mary. *Amazing Grace*. (Dial, 1991)
- Student notebooks or paper/pencils for them to respond

Background for lesson (if necessary)

The attacks of 9/11 provoke profound emotions, including sadness and anger, and raise questions about how and when lessons of tolerance can be integrated into a classroom discussion of these events. Perhaps the best place to start is to recall that the 9/11 attacks were driven by al-Qaeda's extreme intolerance, rooted in a rigid ideology of hatred and social control that claims to speak on behalf of all Muslims. Under no authority but its own, al-Qaeda acted on extreme beliefs to achieve extreme ends. As a result, we have brutal evidence of the depths that intolerance can reach. Yet again, we have seen how important it is for people to respect one another.

At the same time, the attacks raised new barriers to tolerance and understanding. In the attacks of 9/11, and then in the universal response to them, we have two models: the first, a world driven by intolerance to destroy all difference; the second, a world where difference is embraced as the core of a shared humanity. These two poles can mark the boundaries of classroom discussions of the meanings – and significance – of tolerance.

In this lesson, through a series of picture books, the teacher can explore the meaning of tolerance with students. This lesson specifically focuses on the acceptance of differences. Since 9/11 occurs in the beginning of the school year, the teacher can take the opportunity to establish a tone of tolerance and acceptance of differences for the entire school year through these books and conversations. Teachers can opt to read one book per day or several per week, depending on the needs of the students.

Instructional Activity/ Procedures

For each read-aloud selected, the following procedure may be used:

1. Open the lesson by asking students basic questions that will elicit a conversation about differences. Chart some of the responses.

Possible questions include:

- *Are we all the same?*
- *What makes us different?*
- *What might the world be like if we were all the same?*

2. Reinforce the idea that we are all different and it is important that we accept and embrace these differences.
3. Introduce key vocabulary listed above. (You may want to have them pre-written on a chart with simple definitions and images to go with each.)
4. Making sure to read each book beforehand, begin to read aloud one of the books, selecting 1–2 places in the book where students can reflect with each other via a turn-and-talk.
5. Allow students to independently reflect, in writing, on one of the following questions:
 - *What is the message of this book? How can you apply it to your life?*
 - *How would you feel in _____ situation? (insert character's name experiencing issue) Now, thinking about today, how might you help this character?*

6. Re-group the students and discuss the two questions above, the overarching theme of the book and how it can be applied to the classroom.

**Extension
Activities**

Using written responses of the students, teacher can see if students grasped the overarching goal and if not, steps needed to further teach or solidify the concept.

**Evidence of
Understanding**

- Tolerance Bulletin Board: After each read aloud, students identify one thing they will do during the year to be tolerant towards others. These can be placed on a sentence strip on a bulletin board or in a 'Class Tolerance Book' to be kept somewhere students can revisit, if needed.
- Students present their views on the importance of tolerance during a school assembly.