



## Curriculum Connections

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# Responding to Violence and Hate

**ADL**®

## In This Issue

Incidents of violence, such as school shootings or terrorist attacks, raise many issues for parents and educators. How can we assure our children that they are safe in the world? How do we prevent the hatred that leads to violence and terrorism?

This *Curriculum Connections* for grades PreK–12 provides grade-specific lessons and resources that assist in addressing these difficult issues with children at home and in the classroom. The following provides suggested guidelines and strategies for preparing for the discussions with students and responding to prejudice during these discussions.

### Talking with Students about Respect, Bias, Hate and Diversity

It is important for teachers to spend time thinking about how they can most effectively raise complex issues such as hate, bias, scapegoating and exclusion with their students. Educators should keep in mind that these conversations should not be limited to special programs and holidays or in response to a hate or bias incident. Instead, messages about understanding and respect should be a part of everyday business in the classroom. Creating inclusive, respectful classrooms is an ongoing effort, and working for social justice is a life-long endeavor.

To prepare for successfully raising issues of diversity and bias in the classroom, ADL has developed [practices](#) teachers should attempt to make an integral part of their daily practice.

### Responding to Prejudice in the Classroom

On a daily basis people hear and sometimes use words and phrases that demean, ridicule or demonstrate ignorance about people from different groups and backgrounds. Prejudicial phrases and statements often come without warning, leaving the listener stunned and sometimes speechless, unsure how to respond. Unfortunately, the typical response is often to say nothing. While difficult to do, challenging biased and offensive remarks is critical to ensuring dignity and respect for all people. The following are some guidelines for responding to prejudice:

- ➔ Establish guidelines for classroom behavior about respect with your students at the beginning of the school year. When conflicts arise, expectations will be clear.
- ➔ Respond to insensitivity when it occurs, by creating an environment in which all children are treated with respect.
- ➔ Understand that children are keenly aware of differences and must learn to accept them. Do not diminish authentic differences as a means of avoiding conflict.
- ➔ Recognize that your behavior sets an example for your students.
- ➔ Remember that behavioral change is slow. Children are exposed to a range of influences outside the classroom which educators can either reinforce or challenge.

### Resources for Educators and Families

- ➔ [Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate](#)
- ➔ [Discussing Hate and Violence with Children](#): An ADL and National PTA brochure for adult family members and caregivers
- ➔ [Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice](#)

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# Correlation of Lessons to Common Core Standards

Content Area/Standard	Elementary School Lesson (PreK-2)	Elementary School Lesson (3-5)	Middle School Lesson	High School Lesson
<b>Reading</b>				
R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.		X	X	
R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.		X	X	
R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.				X
R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.				X
<b>Writing</b>				
W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.		X		
W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.		X	X	X
W.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.			X	
W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.			X	X
W.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.			X	
W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.			X	
<b>Speaking and Listening</b>				
SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	X	X	X	X

Content Area/Standard	Elementary School Lesson (PreK-2)	Elementary School Lesson (3-5)	Middle School Lesson	High School Lesson
SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	X			
SL.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	X			X
SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	X	X	X	X
Language				
L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.			X	
L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.			X	X

## Elementary School Lesson

# All Kinds of Feelings

### Rationale

How can educators and care providers help young children learn to identify their own and others' feelings and emotions? This activity provides an opportunity to assist children to creatively explore feelings through reflection, discussion, art and dance. The activities help children to understand how they can promote positive feelings in one another by practicing kindness in their daily lives. Children work together to create visual representations of feelings to use as catalysts for discussions throughout the year.

### Objectives

- Children will reflect on, explore, and share their feelings about starting a new school year, meeting new children and teachers and experiencing new environments.
- Children will learn about the connection between words, actions and feelings.
- Children will create visual representations to depict a variety of feelings, which can be used as a catalyst for future discussions.
- Children will develop empathy for other children through sharing personal experiences and exploring commonly-shared emotions and feelings.

### Age Range

Grades PreK–2

### Time

1–3 class meetings (approximately 20 minutes each)

### Key Words

Body language  
Facial expression  
Feelings  
Pantomime  
Posture

### Requirements

- Chart paper, markers or crayons, magazines containing pictures of diverse people showing a wide range of emotions, glue, instruments or music and CD player. [NOTE: If magazines are not available, teachers will need drawing supplies, such as paper, crayons, pencils or markers so children can draw their own pictures of people with different emotions.]

### Advanced Preparation

Ask children to bring in magazines that they can use to create the “Class Collage” part of this lesson (see Part II). Encourage children who can to bring more than one magazine so they can share with children who may not be able to bring in magazines. If magazines are not available, have children draw pictures to use in the “Class Collage” part of this lesson.

Have available any musical CDs or instruments to play during the “Feelings Dance” part of this lesson (see Part III #4).

### Procedures

#### Part I: Group Discussion

1. Discuss the concept of “feelings” by leading a discussion that invites children to reflect on their own feelings about starting a new school year, meeting new children and teachers and experiencing new environments. Use some of the questions below to prompt discussion.

**NOTE:** Modify questions when necessary; some children may be attending a brand new school or program while others may be continuing in a school or program they previously attended. Avoid equating feelings of sadness and/or anger as

wrong or bad with children; reassure children that all people experience anger and sadness sometimes.

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- What are feelings?
  - Does everyone have feelings?
  - Does everyone have the same feelings? Does everyone express them the same way?
  - How did you feel about meeting new children in your class this year?
  - How did you feel about already knowing some of the children in your class?
  - How did you feel about having a new teacher?
  - How did you feel about already knowing some of the teachers you have this year?
  - How did you feel coming to a new place for school?
  - How did you feel coming to a familiar place?
2. List all the feelings discussed on a large sheet of poster board or chart paper, leaving adequate space between the words for the “Class Collage” component of this activity.
  3. Lead a discussion to help children gain an understanding of how their words and actions can promote certain feelings and/or actions. While all feelings are acceptable, help children understand that some actions are not acceptable. For example, name-calling, hitting, biting may be a result of feeling angry or hurt, but these actions do not help lead to a resolution of the original problem. Use some of the below questions to prompt discussion.
    - How do you feel when someone shares his or her toy with you? What might you do?
    - How do you feel when someone will not share his or her toy with you? What might you do?
    - How do you feel when someone says that he or she likes the block tower you just built? What might you do?
    - How do you feel if someone knocks down the block tower you just built? What might you do?
    - How do you feel if someone calls you a name? What might you do?
  4. Ask children to identify the feelings on the list that result from different behaviors and actions (such as being kind to one another, inviting or excluding someone from play, etc.). Circle those particular words using a brightly colored marker or crayon.
  5. Ask children to think about or demonstrate the facial and body expressions they might have while experiencing each of the circled feelings.

#### Part II: “Class Collage”

1. Explain to the children that they will work together to create a “Class Collage” that depicts the various feelings on the list they created during the group discussion component of this lesson. Explain that they will hang the collage in a prominent place in the room so it can be used as a visual catalyst throughout the year to continue reflection about how their behaviors towards one another can trigger various feelings. Explain that it will also be used to help them create a “Feelings Dance.”
2. To create the collage, separate the children into several small groups and distribute magazines containing pictures of diverse people showing a wide range of emotions.

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**NOTE:** If magazines are not available, use drawing supplies.

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3. One word at a time, point to each feeling on the list; as you read the word, have children search through their magazines and cut out (or tear) pictures of people showing that emotion.

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**NOTE:** If magazines are not available, have children draw pictures that express that emotion.

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4. One by one, have the children paste their pictures next to the word of the corresponding feeling on the group list.

### Part III: “Feelings Dance”

1. Lead the children in a discussion of the different expressions and body language illustrated in each picture on the “Class Collage.” Use some of the below questions to prompt discussion.
  - Which feelings do you see in people's faces? Tell us more about that.
  - What other parts of the body were used to express feelings? Describe and have children pantomime.
  - How is posture used in expressing feelings?
  - What feelings are easy to express through pantomime?
  - What feelings are easy to express in real life?
2. Explain that by working together, they will create a “Feelings Dance” of the words listed on the “Class Collage.”
3. Read each word on the “Class Collage” and have children pantomime each emotion using facial expressions and body language. Repeat the list of words and again have children move their bodies and faces to express the feeling; this series of words and movements becomes their “Feelings Dance.”
4. Help children play musical CD's or use instruments to accompany the movements for their “Feelings Dance.”

### Assessment Recommendations

The success of this activity rests on the children's ability to understand, discuss and depict various feelings. Assess their ability and effort by observing their: (1) participation in group discussions, (2) contribution to the class collage, and (3) use of facial and body movements to express emotions.

### Extension Activities

- Have children make a “Feelings” book by having them draw or cut out pictures of places, things or people that make them feel different emotions. Assemble all the pictures into one “Class Feelings Book” which can be shared during group time. For a home/school connection, display the completed book where adults who pick up children at the end of the day can see it.
- Have children use art supplies to create “Feelings Masks” that depict the emotions listed on the “Class Collage” from the previous lesson. Provide an opportunity for children to share their masks with a partner or in small groups. After the students have shared their masks, display them on a bulletin board somewhere else in the room.
- Invite children to paint or color pictures of people showing different feelings and emotions. Have them discuss how colors can be used to express emotion. Ask them how each color makes them feel.
- Play music with different tempos and moods and ask the children to describe how the music makes them feel. Have them move to the different music while expressing the mood the music evokes.

## Elementary School Lesson

# Stitching Together a Community

## Rationale

This lesson encourages students, through a variety of reflective and interactive processes, to think about community on both a local and national level. The lesson helps children consider the many communities of which they are members and the ways in which their diverse communities provide support, strength and pride to them in different and similar ways.

## Objectives

- Students will develop an understanding of the various communities of which they are a part, including the United States of America.
- Students will develop an appreciation of the support, especially in difficult times, that communities provide.
- Students will gain an understanding of and respect for their own and others' communities.
- Students will practice listening and empathy skills as they share their own and learn about others' perspectives about diverse communities.

## Age Range

Grades 3–5

## Time

45–60 minutes for each part of the lesson

## Requirements

- Chart paper, index cards or *Post-it® Notes*
- Markers, bulletin board or wall space
- Pictures of quilts
- Construction paper in different colors and cut into squares roughly 6" x 6" or squares of cloth or felt of the same size
- Assorted art supplies
- Masking tape
- Resource books on quilts

## Key Words

Community  
Geography  
Interests  
Quilt  
Religion  
Support  
Symbol  
Underground Railroad

## Procedures

Part I: What communities do we belong to? How do communities support their members in difficult times?

1. Write the word COMMUNITY in the middle of a piece of chart paper. Ask students to help you generate a list of the different kinds of communities they belong to. Record their responses in a web format around the word. Begin the lesson by telling students that communities often develop because they are unified by certain common elements: language, geography, family relationships, religion, and interests such as sports teams or hobbies. Ask the students to think about communities they are a part of, for example this classroom. Point out that most people can belong to more than one community although some communities might feel more special to a person than others at different times in his or her life. Begin this discussion with some examples.
2. Distribute three index cards or *Post-it® Notes* to each child. Ask students to write on each card the name of one of the communities to which they belong. Model this for the students first. [You might name your family, your school colleagues, your church, synagogue or mosque, people who speak Spanish, your soccer league teammates or the neighbors in your apartment building.]

3. After students have completed the task, ask them to pick one of the communities and make some notes on the card about the ways in which they feel connected to this community. If the students are struggling with this idea, suggest that they can write examples of ways in which this community has supported other community members in need. Again, you might want to model this with one of your own examples. [For your neighbors you might list: knocking on a neighbor's door if we haven't seen each other in a while to make sure he or she is okay, taking in the mail or doing simple errands for a sick neighbor, etc.] After the students have had a few minutes to complete this list, generate a group list (or have students post their *Post-it® Notes*) on a new piece of chart paper entitled SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES.
4. Allow a few minutes for students to review the new list and discuss the following questions with the class:
  - a. What are some of the similarities in the ways in which communities support each other?
  - b. What are some of the differences?
  - c. Is there any community listed here that you would like to know more about?
  - d. What do you as an individual contribute to your community?
  - e. What makes for a "good" community?
  - f. Is our classroom a community? Why or why not?

As you have this discussion with the class, listen for times when children name feelings associated with their communities. Stop periodically and ask the group if they understand the feeling that has just been expressed or if they have ever had a similar experience. Encourage them to reference each other's names, communities and ideas as a way of actively building empathic connections among the children.

5. At the end of the discussion, collect the index cards or *Post-it® Notes* and display them on a bulletin board or wall in your classroom along with the web on COMMUNITY and the SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES list.

#### Part II: How can we share what is important about our own communities?

1. Show students pictures of quilts. (See related resources for books and websites.) Explain that there are at least two elements, which can characterize quilt making. The first is that quilts often tell stories, personal stories or stories of a community, through the use of symbols, images and colors particular to that community. The second is that quilts are often made by groups of people in a community and quilt making helps tie neighbors together to pass on traditions or stories that are important to that community. You might tell students that quilts were used in the Underground Railroad as a way of signaling messages to runaway slaves to help them to safety. Ask students if they have ever seen a quilt and ask them to describe where they saw the quilt and what they saw.
2. Explain to the class that they will each have an opportunity to design and create quilt squares to represent what is important to them about at least two of the communities to which they belong. (see Part 1) Once the quilt squares are completed they will be joined together (stitched or taped or tied with strings depending on the material used) to make a classroom community quilt which will serve as a way for students to share with each other their own stories or traditions about their communities.
3. In order to help students think about how to visually depict what is important to them about their own communities pick one or two examples from the list of SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES and brainstorm possible images and symbols to represent the ideas described. For example, if spending time together was a way in which community members supported each other, ask students to volunteer different ways of depicting that, magazine pictures or drawings of people together; perhaps one particular activity is central to a community's culture and that can be depicted. Alternatively, your students might want to write a short paragraph telling about an important time in their community's history when community members came together to support one another or to support someone outside their community. Consider inviting a guest to your classroom, such as a local quilt maker or quilt owner, to talk about quilts and quilt making. Provide students time to plan their design in class or assign as work to do at home.
4. Provide each student with 2–3 squares of paper or cloth and a variety of art supplies using glue or staples to adhere the design to the quilt square.

### Part III: What have I learned about my own community? What can I learn about yours?

1. Have students sit in a large circle and lay the quilt squares out in the middle. Suggest that everyone take a few minutes to look, again, at all the quilt squares and marvel at their colorful diversity and unique designs.
2. Explain to the class that now that their quilt squares are complete, they will have an opportunity to hear each other explain the meaning of their designs.
3. Give each student an opportunity to pick one of his or her squares and talk about what it represents.

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**NOTE:** If you have students who are shy or have difficulty speaking or putting their thoughts into words, you might choose to give the option of not sharing or perhaps you might want to help these students prepare for this in advance. Also, depending on the size of your class you may want to do this in two different sittings. Alternatively, rather than asking everyone to participate you might simply ask “Is there anyone who would like to tell us about his or her square?”] If necessary, talk about listening skills and strategies students could use to help them focus on what is being shared by their fellow classmates. Remind them that each child is sharing something that is very important to him or her. Remind students to think about ways that they can show respect for what is being said.

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4. Write the following questions on the board and let the children know that they will be discussing these questions after all students have had an opportunity to share. After the sharing, use the following questions for discussion:
  - What are some new things that you learned about your own community as you worked on your design?
  - What are some new things that you learned about communities by listening to your classmates?
  - What questions do you still have about communities?
  - What does our new quilt show about what we think is important in communities?
5. End this lesson by collecting all the squares and putting them all together. If the squares are made of paper, lay the squares down on a large flat surface and carefully tape the seams vertically and horizontally until all squares are attached. If the squares are made of cloth, sew, staple or tie the squares together. Display the quilt in the classroom where all can see it.

### Assessment Recommendations:

This lesson has been designed so that each component—the web, the index cards, the lists, the brainstorming session on symbolizing ways in which communities support each other, as well as the final discussion, can offer opportunities for you, as the teacher, to figure out how your learners are making sense of the concepts in an informal way. Here are some other suggestions for assessment:

- ➔ Ask students to create a sign to accompany the displayed quilt (much as one would find in a museum) describing the origin and purpose of the quilt; the meaning contained within it and perhaps, a title for the quilt.
- ➔ Create a class newsletter describing all phases of this mini-unit. Assign components of the process to pairs of children and ask them to write an article describing what happened and what was learned.
- ➔ Invite another class to view the quilt and prepare a class presentation explaining the meaning of the quilt squares.

### Extended Activities

- ➔ Have students interview parents or other adults in the community asking them how they define community and answering the question of what is important to them about their own community.
- ➔ Have students write an essay on the question: “What does my community need from me?”
- ➔ Read and discuss *The Secret to Freedom* by Marcia Vaughan illustrated by Larry Johnson (New York, NY: Lee and Low Books, 2002). In this book, great Aunt Lucy tells a story of her slave days when she and her brother learned the Underground Railroad quilt code.

## Middle School Lesson

# Examining and Interrupting Hate

## Rationale

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to develop a vocabulary and understanding of potentially unfair and hateful attitudes and behaviors in general, and to consider how events of the past have led to unfair stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and scapegoating of, among others, Muslim and Arab Americans. Students are also asked to consider ways that they can interrupt the escalation of hateful attitudes and behaviors.

[NOTE: Please see [“Talking with Students about Diversity and Bias”](#) for more information about responding to expressions of prejudice in the classroom.]

## Objectives

- Students will explore the concepts of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating.
- Students will consider how the events of September 11th have led to stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating.
- Students will identify ways that they can interrupt the escalation of hate in their schools and communities and consider the value of taking such actions.

## Age Range

Grades 6–8

## Time

2–3 class periods

## Requirements

- Chart paper, markers

## Key Words

Discrimination  
Prejudice  
Scapegoating  
Stereotype

## Procedures

1. On a piece of chart paper, write the word “stereotype” and have students create a web for the term. Encourage students to share their understanding of “stereotype” and give examples as they respond. Upon completion of the web, have students develop a definition for the word.

Suggested definition: A **stereotype** is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences.

2. Ask students to consider how stereotypes are learned and what effect they have both on the person who believes them and the person or group who is being stereotyped. Have students discuss how even seemingly positive stereotypes like “Asian Americans are good at math” can still have negative results. For example, tracking Asian-American students into academic or extracurricular activities without taking into account individuals students’ interests or abilities or a teacher not providing appropriate assistance to an Asian-American students who may need extra help in math.
3. On another piece of chart paper, write the word “prejudice,” and have students create a web for this term. For example, “I don’t like you because you dress differently from me and my friends.” Again, encourage them to think about the meaning of the word as well as examples. Upon completion of the web, have students develop a definition for the word.

Suggested definition: **Prejudice** is a premature judgment or belief formed about a person, group or concept before gaining sufficient knowledge or by selectively disregarding facts.

4. Ask students to discuss how stereotypes and prejudice are related. Ask them if they think it is likely that a person who is prejudiced toward a group of people also believes certain stereotypes about them. Have students give examples to support their thinking.
5. On a new piece of chart paper, write the word “discrimination,” and have students create a web for this term. Prompt students by explaining that while stereotype and prejudice are attitudes, discrimination is an action. For example, many African Americans experience extra surveillance in variety of life situations, such as shopping and when driving. Have students share their understanding of the term and give examples of how groups have been or are still discriminated against. Upon completion of the web, have students develop a definition for the word.

Suggested definition: **Discrimination** is the denial of justice, resources and fair treatment of individuals and groups (often based on social identity), through employment, education, housing, banking, political rights, etc.

6. Have students consider how discrimination can be an outgrowth of stereotyping and prejudice.
7. If it is unlikely that students will have a working knowledge of the term scapegoating, begin by asking them if they or a group to which they belong has ever been unfairly blamed for something. After they have given examples, have students complete a web for the term scapegoating and then work together to develop a definition.

Suggested definition: **Scapegoating** is blaming an individual or group for something based on that person or group’s identity when the person or group is not responsible.

8. Ask students to think of past and present examples of scapegoating (e.g., gay men blamed for the AIDS epidemic, Jews blamed for events taking place in Germany prior to World War II, and again in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world, after the terrorist attacks, newly arriving immigrants blamed for economic problems in the United States). Have students consider how scapegoating can interfere with getting to the real cause of a problem as well as hurting those who are accused.

9. On the board, write the following statements:

- All teenagers shoplift.
- I don’t like teenagers.
- I wouldn’t hire a teenager to work for me.
- Teenagers caused my business to fail.

10. Have students identify which of the terms that they defined best matches each of the statements, e.g., “all teenagers shoplift” is a stereotype; “I don’t like teenagers” is prejudice, and so forth.

11. As a whole group, have students think of a similar example that shows both their understanding of the terms and how they are interrelated. Write this example on the board.

12. Divide students into small groups and give each group a piece of chart paper and marker. Have students select a recorder for the group. Instruct the recorder to draw a large pyramid on the paper and divide it into four sections. Starting at the bottom, label the sections as follows: STEREOTYPE, PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION, SCAPEGOATING (see Figure 1).

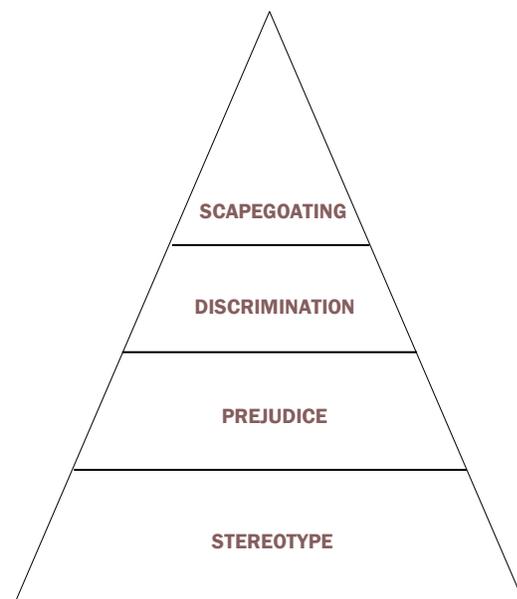


Figure 1

13. Working together in their groups, have students think of examples similar to those on the board that illustrate how negative attitudes and behaviors can escalate. Instruct them to write their responses on the chart paper in the appropriate sections of the pyramid. Encourage students to refer to the definitions as needed.
14. After all groups have presented, have a whole-group discussion, using some or all of the following questions:
15. Close this lesson by having students write an essay on how they can stop the escalation of hateful attitudes and behaviors in their schools and communities.

**Assessment Recommendations:**

Students' understanding should be assessed through:

- ➔ contribution to class discussion
- ➔ active participation in a small group assignment
- ➔ ability to provide examples or evidence to support ideas
- ➔ willingness to listen and consider the ideas of others
- ➔ presentation of ideas in essay form

**Extended Activities:**

- ➔ Designate a bulletin board in the classroom where students can post articles from print resources or from the Internet that illustrate the concepts covered in this lesson. Provide time for students to discuss the articles and consider whether the situation is an example of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and/or scapegoating. Encourage students to examine how a situation, which may appear to be a clear example of one of these concepts, will, upon careful examination, often reveal an escalation of hate. For example, the brutal deaths of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd did not happen without underlying stereotypes and prejudice toward gay men and African Americans.
- ➔ Have students research cultural groups that have been victims of prejudice and discrimination in the United States and prepare timelines of important events that trace their struggles.
- ➔ Have students research the treatment of German Americans and Japanese Americans during World War II and report their findings in a written or oral report. Their presentation should explain how treatment of these two groups escalated from stereotypes about them to blaming them for events over which they had no control. Encourage students to learn about young people who work to end prejudice and discrimination in their schools and communities.

## High School Lesson

# Diversity: Our Strength, Our Challenge

## Rationale

This highly interactive three-part lesson creates a supportive forum for students to explore both the dynamics of hateful behavior and the strength of unified action to counter it. Sharing personal backgrounds and experiences with name-calling and prejudice, students will develop an appreciation of their similarities and differences and build a sense of group unity. Through examining the roles that they each play in either interrupting or perpetuating bias in their schools and communities, students will develop a sense of personal responsibility for combating prejudice and will learn ways to create inclusive and respectful campus environments.

[NOTE: Please see "[Talking with Students about Diversity and Bias](#)" for more information about responding to expressions of prejudice in the classroom.]

## Objectives

- Students will depict and share important influences that have shaped their own cultural, religious, gender and social beliefs.
- Students will share their own and learn of others' personal experiences with prejudice.
- Students will examine the roles that each person plays in either perpetuating or interrupting prejudice and bias.
- Students will learn effective strategies to confront bias.

## Age Range

Grades 9–12

## Time

2–3 class periods with optional extension activities

## Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Roles People Play](#) (one for each student)
- [Strategies to Confront Bias](#) (one for each student)
- [The Importance of Individual Participation and Action](#) (one for each student)

Other Material:

- One blank white on transparency film for each student
- Pens/markers that will write on the transparencies, several colors for each student, if possible
- Overhead projector/Screen

## Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Before teaching this lesson, review "[Talking with Students about Diversity and Bias](#)" to assist in creating a safe environment for students to explore issues of identity, prejudice and bias.

## Key Words

Bias  
Gender  
Ethnicity  
Identity  
Lens  
Race  
Religion  
School climate

## Procedures

### Part I

1. After setting up guidelines for a safe, respectful and inclusive classroom environment, distribute one transparency and different colored pens/markers to each student.
2. Instruct students that you will share with them four categories that define personal identity and they will then be asked to draw symbols that represent each aspect of identity in their own lives. Students may draw anything that has meaning for them. They do not have to draw a symbol for each category; however encourage them to do so. Explain that the symbols/drawings will be seen later in the activity by the rest of the class.
3. Tell students they will have about three minutes for each drawing. Emphasize that this is not an art lesson, but symbolic “shorthand.” Instruct students to work alone, and not to comment on anyone else’s work. Tell students that there will be a time to share and discuss the drawings later in the lesson.
4. Read aloud and/or list on the chalkboard the following identity categories, one by one. If written on the chalkboard, also use the questions as verbal prompts to assist the students in their drawings.
  - **Gender:** How does it feel to you to be male/female; what have you learned about being female/male in our society? Who taught you those things? How were you taught?
  - **Race:** How do you identify yourself racially? What have you been taught about your race? Who or what has taught you about your race?
  - **Ethnicity/Culture:** How would you represent your ethnic or cultural identity? Show how it feels to be a part of your culture. How did you learn about your culture? Who or what were your teachers?
  - **Religion:** How do you identify yourself in terms of faith or religion? If you follow a formal religion, where have you learned about your traditions and beliefs? If you have spiritual beliefs, how have they developed? If you have no religious or spiritual beliefs draw anything that represents your own beliefs. Who have been your teachers? How have you been taught?

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**NOTE:** It is important not to make assumptions about anyone’s religious affiliation or belief. Agnostic, Atheist, Pagan, Wiccan, or other beliefs may be expressed by students, as with all other categories. Allow no negative comments.

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5. After all students have completed their drawings, ask students to find a partner to share their transparencies with one another. Allow five minutes for this sharing. [If the maturity and trust level of the group is high, teachers may ask students to find a person they do not know well for this sharing.]
6. Ask for 3–5 volunteers, depending on time constraints, to share their illustrations with the whole class. Use an overhead projector to allow all students to see their classmates’ work.
7. Have all students hold their transparencies up to their faces and look through their transparency at their classmates.
8. Conduct a discussion about what they see. Ask the students the following questions:
  - How do other people look through the transparency?
  - Do you see each other clearly?
  - What effect might this “lens” have on how you view other people and events?
9. To conclude, have students write down, and submit anonymously, two things they learned from this exercise. Close by inviting volunteers to share some of the things they learned from this exercise.

### Part II

1. Reinforce the previous learning and connect it to the following lesson by reading a few of the anonymous comments received from the students at the conclusion of the previous lesson.
2. List on chart paper the four identity areas (gender, race, ethnicity/culture, religion) used in the previous lesson.

3. Invite students to add to this list other types of groups in the school with which they or others identify. This might include: grade level, athletic and civic associations, interests, sexual orientation, political affiliation, etc.

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**NOTE:** Use your judgment in deciding if the following portion of the activity should be conducted in stand-ups or in small group discussions. If conducting stand-ups, you may want to consider choosing categories that may be perceived as less risky to start the activity.

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4. Tell students that you are going to conduct an exercise to illustrate concepts about similarities and differences. Using the list, invite students as they feel comfortable to stand up when a category is called that is important in their lives. Not one should be pressured to stand. Instruct students to look around and see who is standing/sitting with them. Tell students that there should be no talking during the exercise. The phrasing for each call is "If \_\_\_\_\_ is important in the way you identify yourself, please stand up." Pause 5–10 seconds after students are standing and then say, "Thank you, please be seated." Call the next category.

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**NOTE:** If there are students with physical limitations that prohibit their ability to stand, conduct the activity as a hand-raising exercise.

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5. Following the stand-ups, ask students some or all of the following questions:
  - How did it feel if you were standing or sitting alone or with only a few other people?
  - How did it feel if you were standing or sitting with the majority of the group?
  - Have you ever been targeted or picked on because of your association with one of these categories? What happened? How did that feel?
  - Discuss how it feels to be considered either "alone" or of the "majority" on campus. How do teachers, administrators and other students treat those students? How does this dynamic affect the school environment?
6. Assign students the task of observing their school climate to notice the ways in which students may be targeted, excluded or included in various ways throughout the school day. Have them record their observations in writing.

### Part III

1. Ask students to report on any incidents of bias, name-calling they recorded since the last class meeting. Have students comment on what they did when they witnessed these acts? Ask if they acted differently from how they have acted in the past?
2. Distribute the [Roles People Play](#) handout to each student. Have students count off to form groups of four students each. Ask students to spend time privately writing their responses to each of the four questions.
3. Once completed, ask students to share their responses with the others in their small group. Once they have had the chance to discuss their responses, invite the student to discuss and be prepared to share their responses to two additional two questions:
  - When you interrupted an act of bias or prejudice, what motivated you to do so?
  - When you witnessed an act of bias and did not intervene, what motivated you to "stand by?"
4. Ask the small groups to discuss their responses to the last two questions. Chart common themes or ideas about the reasons why they intervened and why they did not. Ask students which is easier to do—interrupt or stand by and why? What are the consequences of either action?
5. Explain to students that learning to interrupt acts of hate and bias is difficult. There are no easy answers, but it is important to understand that each person plays a role in combating bias. Ignoring bias allows the act to go unchecked, allowing it to escalate to possibly more harmful and dangerous levels. Ask for examples in history or from their personal experiences when they have seen this occur.
6. Distribute the [Strategies to Confront Bias](#) handout and project the transparency on the overhead projector. Read the opening paragraph aloud. Have student volunteers read each of the strategies listed. Elicit other strategies and add to the list.

7. When the list is completed and has been read aloud, ask if anyone has a question about any of the suggested strategies. Ask students if they think that it is always appropriate to respond to a bigoted remark or action. Be sure that the point is made that it is not always wise or safe to respond in the moment; notifying an appropriate authority, or approaching the person later may be a safer and more effective strategy.
8. Share with students the quotes from *The Importance of Individual Participation and Action* handout. Conclude by inviting students to react to the quotes and discuss the relationship of the quote to the lesson they have just completed.

### Assessment Recommendations:

Students' understanding should be assessed through:

- contribution to class discussions
- active participation in a small group assignments
- ability to provide examples or evidence to support ideas
- willingness to listen and consider the ideas of others

### Extended Activities:

- Have students research origins of the motto *E Pluribus Unum* and write an essay about its meaning, historically and today.
- Have students conduct research about a situation or event in the news about an incident of bias or prejudice and write a short summary of what happened, why it happened and what they think should be done about the situation.
- Ask the class to generate "real life" campus examples to role play some of the actions students can take to make their school a more inclusive and respectful place for all people.

# Roles People Play

**BOX A: TARGET**

Describe a time when someone said something prejudiced or biased to you.

**BOX B: AGGRESSOR**

Describe a time when you said something prejudiced or biased to someone.

**BOX C: BYSTANDER**

Describe a time when you saw an act of prejudice or bias taking place and you didn't do anything. Why do you think you didn't do anything?

**BOX D: ALLY**

Describe a time when you saw an act of prejudice or bias and you took action as an ally. Why did you choose the actions you did?

# Strategies to Confront Bias

When confronting acts of bias or prejudice, it is important to incorporate a process that helps people to take control of a situation. The following process has proved helpful for many people, from elementary school children to adults.

- Begin the process by clarifying for yourself what you want to get out of the interaction. If venting your anger is your primary goal, you may be unlikely to have a successful interaction with the other person. Similarly, making an equally offensive remark or publicly embarrassing the person who made the comment or told the joke is not a productive response.
- Try to assume good will. Many people who make offensive remarks do so out of ignorance. Because they do not intend harm, they often assume no harm is done.
- Talk to the person privately. By speaking to the person who offended you one-on-one, you remove his or her necessity to “save face” publicly or to defend his or her actions in front of a group.
- Start the conversation by “vesting your relationship.” People listen better when they know they matter to the other person. For example, start the conversation by saying something like, “I want to talk with you, Mary, because your friendship is very important to me.”
- Use “I” statements, not “you” statements. The point of this conversation is to let the person who offended you know how you feel about what was said. The conversation will be less successful if it focuses on what the other person did “wrong.” Choosing words accordingly will help eliminate the person’s need to defend his or her actions.
- Remember your “rights.” You do not have the right to dictate someone else’s sense of humor. You do, however, have the right to request that this type of humor not be used in your presence.

# The Importance of Individual Participation and Action

“The world is too dangerous to live in – not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen.” —Albert Einstein

“There was no particular day on which I said, from henceforth I will devote myself to the liberation on my people; instead I simply found myself doing so, and could not do otherwise.” —Nelson Mandela

“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against an injustice, he send forth a tiny ripple of hope.” —Robert F. Kennedy

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committee citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” —Margaret Mead

“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” —James Baldwin

“Let us not forget, after all, that there is always a moment when a moral choice is made.” —Elie Wiesel