

## QUICK ACTIVITY IDEAS TO GET KIDS THINKING

### BUILD CULTURAL AWARENESS

Divide students into groups, and assign each group a culture to study. Ask the group to create a presentation or poster on their assigned culture, including information about the geographical location of the people, traditions, foods, clothing and social roles. Make a brief video that can be shared at assembly or with parents, or invite the parents to a school event and allow each group to present their findings to parents and others.

Key date: Harmony Day – 21 March every year.

### DEVELOP SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARENESS

Ask for suggestions of social justice issues the group has seen on the news or heard about and write a list. Encourage students to learn more about these issues during school and at home. Select one issue and screen an appropriate news clip on a current event related to this topic. Discuss the clip as a group and ask students to voice their opinions and how they think the people affected by the social injustice would feel. Set up a mock debate to help build the students' communication skills around these issues.

### PROMOTE ACCEPTANCE

Design acceptance posters to encourage the acceptance of all people. Ask each student to create an attention-grabbing poster that promotes tolerance and understanding. Place the student-created posters throughout the school and ask local businesses if they will display the posters, so students can spread their positive message.

### EXPLORE DISPARITY

This activity demonstrates the impact of educational disparities. Give one half of the classroom a few sheets of coloured paper, pencils and scissors and the other half one sheet of paper each, pencils and no scissors. Ask students to create paper flags that include symbols that represent them. Once the artworks are complete, students will see how low-quality resources and high-quality resources can affect student achievement. Discuss real life examples of low-quality resources and how this affects student performance.

## SEE SIMILARITIES NOT DIFFERENCES

Give a lemon to each student and ask them to “get to know” their lemons. Have them look for any identifying marks, shape, brightness of the lemon, etc. Then, take the lemons, put them in a basket/pile and have the students find their lemon. Students should not have trouble with this. The next day, peel the lemons and have the students attempt to find their lemons again in the basket/pile.

This will teach them that although we look different on the outside, we are the same on the inside. Discuss the ways in which people are similar on the inside and how our needs and goals are often very similar.

Place students in pairs and have them observe and interview each other. Have students list their differences as well as similarities. See if these attributes are external or internal, and discuss this with the class. Students should leave the activity realising that it’s important to respect and celebrate human differences.

## DISCUSSING GENDER STEREOTYPES

Ask the students to draw a mechanic, a fire fighter, a doctor, a nurse, a teacher, a scientist, and a volleyball player. Collect the drawings and tally up how many men and women were represented in each drawing. Provide the information to the children. Ask them why they think that more men were drawn in one scenario than another, and why more women in another. If needed, prompt that these stereotypes may come from the tv shows, books, and people around us. Ask if there are girls jobs and boys jobs, and workshop a response to stereotyped comments such as “girls can’t do that”.

## SHARING AFFIRMATIONS

Break children into small circles and give each student a piece of paper. Ask them to tear it into pieces so they have one piece for each student in the group. On each piece of paper, they should write the student’s name, and then list a positive characteristic of that student. Remind them to focus on personality traits and behaviours, not physical attributes.

When each student has written an affirmation for each of the other students in the group, the teacher can collect the papers and read aloud some of the positive comments about each person. The students can keep their lists to revisit in the future, though it’s a good idea for all of the affirmations to first go to the teacher (as a safeguard against any poor comments), who can then check them and give them to the students the next day. This can be a nice way to build a sense of safety and support within the group.

## THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Provide each student with a small piece of paper or a paper cutout of a person. Give the students a couple of minutes to draw themselves with their hair, face and clothes. Ask the students to think about bullying and what bullying or unkind words they've heard. For each of the unkind words that are shared by the students, ask everyone to pass their paper person around the circle and make a small tear or crumple in the paper person in front of them. Explain that these tears represent the effect this bullying has.

When there have been enough tears made, have the students try to repair their paper people by flattening, erasing, and taping. Discuss how bullying can have lasting effects and how it can take a long time for people to rebuild trust and confidence if they have been bullied.

These paper people can be displayed in the classroom as a reminder of the effects of hurtful actions.