Tolerance
Discussion Questions, Vocabulary and Activity
For Grades 3-5

Segment Summary

Cory Strieff and Jason Harris embrace tolerance by accepting their cultural and racial differences.

Cory Strieff is white and Jason Harris is black. The two boys have been best friends for over a year, and they enjoy learning about each other's culture. Some people think the boys make an unlikely pair, but Cory and Jason say they have so much in common that their racial differences really aren't a big deal. Other students, particularly those in high school, say that attitudes about race and friendship change as children age. They believe that people who share their same race and culture understand them better than people outside of their culture. By staying with their own "kind," these students think they lessen the probability of being teased or ridiculed. Cory and Jason, however, believe that if neither of them had been willing to risk leaving his cultural comfort zone, both of them would have missed out on an amazing friendship.

Discussion Questions:

1. What character traits can you identify in Cory and Jason? What about the high school students whose attitudes toward race differ from Cory's and Jason's?
2. How do Cory's and Jason's ideas of tolerance differ from the high school students' perceptions of tolerance? Whose ideas do you identify with the most: Cory's and Jason's or the high school students'?
3. Why do you think it was so easy for Cory and Jason to become friends?
4. What are the benefits of having friends who are different from you?
5. What are some ways you show tolerance for your family members, your classmates and your neighbors?
**Tolerance**

**Vocabulary Words and Definitions**

**Culture (n.)**
**Definition:** the ideas, beliefs and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a society
**Context:** In Saree’s Arabic culture, women cover their heads with veils.

**Custom (n.)**
**Definition:** something that people do in a particular society because it is traditional
**Context:** It is an American custom to celebrate the Fourth of July with beautiful displays of fireworks.

**Tolerance (n.)**
**Definition:** accepting others; a willingness to allow people to do, say or believe what they want without punishing or criticizing them
**Context:** Elliot shows little tolerance for new students who don’t treat him with respect.

**Tradition (n.)**
**Definition:** a belief, custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time
**Context:** It is a tradition for Nora’s family to spend every Saturday afternoon playing football at the park.

Tolerance Activity
Teach Me Your Ways

Objectives:

Students will be able to
• Discuss various family traditions and cultural customs
• Recognize the ways that culture is transmitted from person to person
• Demonstrate an understanding of and tolerance for diverse traditions and customs
• Compose a journal entry detailing information they learned about their own and others’ cultures

Materials:

• Pens, pencils
• Paper
• Journals or learning logs

Procedure:

1. Begin this activity by demonstrating one of your family’s traditions or cultural customs for your students. Share with students the meaning behind the tradition or custom and who taught it to you.

2. Lead a discussion about the ways that culture is transmitted from one person to another in families and other social groups. If time permits, allow students to give examples of traditions or customs they’ve learned from members of their families.

3. Separate students into pairs, and ask each student to think about a family tradition or cultural custom that is unique to his or her family. Explain to students that they will share their tradition or custom with their partners.

   Note: You may want to consider assigning this activity near the end of the day so that students can spend time at home preparing any materials they might need for their demonstrations the following day.

4. Within each pair, instruct students to take turns demonstrating and explaining their tradition or custom to their partners. Then have each student share and explain his or her partner’s tradition or custom with the rest of the class.

   Note: To save time, you may choose to place pairs in small groups in order for pairs to demonstrate each other’s traditions or customs instead of having each pair demonstrate for the entire class.

5. End the activity by assigning students to write a journal entry that addresses one or more of the following questions:

   • What new information did you learn from your classmates’ presentations?
   • Which of your classmates are you interested in getting to know better now that you know more about their cultures? Why?
   • Did this activity cause you to develop more tolerance for a group of people or a group’s traditions or customs? Explain.
   • What did you learn about your own culture or your own family by participating in this activity?
## Related Vocabulary Words

- culture
- custom
- tolerance
- tradition
Assessment

1. Individual assignments should be evaluated using a set standard offering letter grades or points.

2. Group assignments should be evaluated using guidelines that address individual student participation and contribution, as well as evaluating the group as a whole.

3. The *Tolerance Assessment/Evaluation* form serves as a guideline for assessing each student’s performance within the activities and lessons. Additional evaluations may be added to the table, such as writing assessments for grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, etc. Reports may be graded on accuracy and analysis. Students may also be evaluated on their use of technology within key activities that encourage using the Internet for research and for the creation of a Web page.

4. Students should receive a copy of the evaluation form at the beginning of the program so that they are aware of the assessment standards and the necessity of participation in order to fully benefit from the program.

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**Tolerance Assessment/Evaluation**

Name ____________________      Class ______________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson/Activity</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Tolerance</em></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Participated in class discussion</td>
<td>Participated in class discussion and shared tradition or custom with partner</td>
<td>Participated in class discussion, shared tradition or custom with partner, demonstrated partner’s tradition to class and wrote journal reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Teach Me Your Ways</em></td>
<td>No participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Additional comments: