

Overview:

My plan will take the appearance of three sections. The first section is establishing with the students of good sense of identity for each of them. I would like the students to be aware of themselves and their needs as well as know that they are each important beings in our class community.

The second part of my plan is to create a positive classroom community where all members feel safe and valued. I would like for all members to be comfortable with each other and know that they can achieve goals as a team.

The third part of my plan is to teach the students tolerance of others. Learning to act as a team or community involves the knowledge of tolerance, forgiveness, and the specialness of being unique.

Objectives:

My goal is to create a classroom community where everyone is/feels accepted, both in and out of the classroom. Specifically I have three outcomes I wish to achieve:

- 1) To foster a positive sense of identity in students
- 2) To create a welcoming classroom community
- 3) To develop tolerance in self and others

Rational:

I am approaching the unit plan in a set of three goals because I feel that in order to teach peace education we can not just focus one area. I feel that we need to intertwine many aspects in order to make a difference. Fostering peace and tolerance is like building with blocks and without the foundations of solid bottom blocks the top will fall down on itself. I hope to provide a good foundation to my students for continuing on in their school and community.

I am using stories and story telling as part of my plan for several reasons. I teach early years and we use books as springboards for all subject areas and topics. So this is a method young students are familiar with. Young students love to talk about themselves and share things so story telling comes naturally to them. In most cases the students think they are visiting with their neighbor not building community, so the exercises are enjoyable and beneficial without feeling like work or being difficult.

The Plan:

Part 1

Outcome: To foster a positive sense of identity in students

Method: I will start off the school year by executing a series of activities. The activities are designed to help each child believe that they are unique, special and important to our class community. I want each student to believe they have something valuable to contribute. These are only a few of the activities that I will do with the class, as I will be getting to know them and they will be getting to know me I will need to make changes and adjust my plans accordingly.

The first lesson I plan to take part in with my students will be during the first week of school. I will read them the book *What I like about me!!* By Allia Zobel- Nolan. I will then have the kids design a poster with things they really like about themselves, and share that poster with a partner or the whole class. We will then hang the posters all together on a bulletin board. The importance of this lesson is that all kids have something in their lives that they are proud of. I am using the activity as an ice breaker for the kids to have a chance to share a part of themselves that they are happy about and for the kids to learn something new about the kids they have been in school with for a year already.

Another lesson I would like to do with my class is to read *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. I would like to use this book twice in the year, once at the beginning of the year and once at the end of the year. In the first month of school we would read the book and make a class book modeled after

the story book. The first session will require the students to each write a page about themselves. Here they have a chance to showcase themselves with things they can do and what they think is important about them. (Example: The important thing about Bob is that he can speak French. He likes pepperoni pizza, plays goalie in hockey and wears Nike shoes but the important thing about Bob is that he speaks French.) The pages will be bound into a class book that the students will have access too all year to read and share. The second activity that I would like to do with this book is found in the community section of the paper. The important thing about this activity is that each student gets to share things that they feel makes them important, plus that it is made into a book the students get reminders of those things all year long.

A longer term activity I would like to do with the class is an All About Me bulletin board. Each week a student is highlighted they will get to take home a small bulletin board to decorate with pictures, certificates, objects whatever they want to share parts of themselves with class. The student will get a chance to share the items and the stories behind them with the class and the board will remain on display for the rest of the week. Kids will have a chance to look at it and ask questions as they would like. The importance of this activity is that each student gets a chance to feel special and highlighted in the class. Each student will have a chance to share with students and staff that comes to our room pictures and objects that they want to share.

Part 2

Outcome: To create a welcoming classroom community

Method: I would like to create more of a community feel to the class. I want to students to feel that while they are individually special and unique they are all part of a community or group and can achieve more if they work together and support each other. I plan to use the following activities:

The first activity I would like to do is to give each student 1 crayon (different color to each student) and ask them to draw a beautiful outdoor scene. I will then have them share their pictures with their tablemates and ask what missing in the picture and what could be done to improve the picture. I will then read *The Crayon Box That Talked* by Shane DeRolf. As a class I will now have the students work together, each using their own color of crayon, to create a class mural. We will talk about how the crayons in the box worked together to create something beautiful and about how working together rather than on our own made the experience and the result better.

Another activity I would like to try for building community is to talk about how we all have things in common and make a list of things we all have in common. It can be anything from needing to eat, to feelings, to toys etc. As an example of something we all have in common we will read *Shelia the Brave* by Kevin Henkes. After we read the book we will talk about feelings and how every one of us has feelings. We will then get into partners and the kids will tell each other about a something they were afraid of or a time they felt fear. The kids can go as deep with this activity as comfortable sharing anything from I am scared of spiders to my mom is sick and I am afraid she will die. The importance of this is that not everything we share with others is happy experiences or possessions. Another point I think is important is that even in elementary school kids develop a hierarchy (something I hope to disband with the community building) but it is an important step that kids realize that even the kids they think are the cool kids are scared of something sometimes, and have the same fears as they do. It will put everyone on an even playing field.

As mentioned in part one of my plans I would like to use the book *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown as a community building activity. This activity is a culminating activity. I would like for each student to leave our class with their own personal, hand made copy of The Important Book. The special thing about this book is that each student would write a page about each student in the class, therefore each student will leave the class with a book about what each member in the class thinks is important about them. (Example: Bob would have a book with 19 entries about the important thing about Bob) the importance of this lesson would be that the kids will see in which positive ways his classmates see him. He will feel about himself as well as feel good about the people around him; he will see that kindness spreads.

There were several other ideas from class I think would be great community building lessons that I wish to note but will not expand on. I would like to try the ideas of class books titled what I like about __ (Bob) __ and what do you like about __ (recess) __. I really like the idea of building community within the school by having writing buddies in a higher grade who records the younger student's stories for them.

Part 3

Outcome: To develop tolerance in self and others

Method: The third thing I would like to look at is tolerance of others. I think that in order to really get a good feel of community we need to not only see ourselves as special and see the beauty of working together but also how to get along with people we do not always see eye to eye with.

The first activity I would like to do with the class is reading a book called the *Differ Ants* by Winnipeg author LeRoy Peters. The book is about a storytelling ant and he tells the story of 2 ant colonies that are enemies and how with the help of one ant they see the things they have in common and celebrate their differences. I would like to do an activity were we talk about all the things that all ants have in common, perhaps we can research this for a science connection, I will then have each student make a

paper ant. We will hang them on the wall and look and discuss all the similarities and differences of the ants in colony we created. The importance of this lesson is the discussion this will lead to and how this relates to what people all have in common and things that could be different.

I would continue the ant theme by then reading *Taller Ants* by LeRoy Peters. The message in this book is that no matter how you look on the outside everyone is special inside. We will talk about how even though ants look small and insignificant they can carry 10- 20 times body weight (small but mighty) and that we need to look beyond appearances and see if we can think of other places we can use this strategy. I would like to note at this time the suggestion by Jessica in using *Hey Little Ant*, Author unknown, as another book I would use with the ant theme.

Another lesson I would like to try will talk about perspectives and how people have preconceived conceptions of others that are not always true. For this I will read *Round Trip* by Ann Jonas and look at the different perspectives we have as humans and talk about how there are two sides to every story etc. This is a fabulous book that shows that things are not always as they seem and show a completely different picture if you turn the book upside down. I will use this book to show that things are not always as they seem. I would like to give the students different scenarios to try out and see that things are not always as they seem and that what may be important you may not be the same thing that is important to the other person.

The last activity I would like to talk about is including an activity that Laura taught us in class. I will read *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox and have the class each make a prayer flag and send a wish out to the children of the world. I found this activity inspiring and was delighted with the versatility of it. Our school takes part in Operation Christmas Child and many of our families sponsor children around the world. I think that activities that connect us to others and make us see that our world is so much larger than what we can see is an important lesson for all children to learn. If we start teaching children acceptance and tolerance of others at an early age they will use those tools naturally as they get older.

References

Children's Books

What I like about me!! by Allia Zobel- Nolan.

The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown.

The Crayon Box That Talked by Shane DeRolf

Shelia the Brave by Kevin Henkes

Differ Ants by LeRoy Peters

Taller Ants by LeRoy Peters

Round Trip by Ann Jonas

Whoever you are by Mem Fox