



National Farmers Union

*“Diversity: It’s What We Have In
Common ”*

Section 4: Grades 9-12

Contents:

Lesson 1: Diversity Is Not A Handicap ~ 1 hour

Lesson 2: Scavenger Hunt ~ 1 hour

Lesson 3: Let’s Talk It Out ~ 1 hour

Lesson 4: Use An Overlapping Point Of View ~ 1 hour

Optional Activities

For more information contact:

National Farmers Union

mmiller@nfudc.org

202.554.1600

www.nfu.org


proudly supports this curriculum
chsfoundation.org

Lesson 1: Diversity Is Not A Handicap

- Unit Objective:** Students will experience a measure of difficulty in doing things that become easier when others show empathy.
- Grades:** 9-12
- Length:** 1 hour: 25 minutes for the opening activity; 10 minutes for snacks, 25 minutes for closing activities.
- Materials Needed:** Eye masks, construction-type earmuffs, crutches, writing paper and markers, copies of the **Are You Empathetic** worksheet, the **SITUATION** sheet, and the **Diversity, Disability, Achievement** sheet.
- Preparation:** Set up round tables (if available) or rectangular tables in classroom style facing front. In advance, cut the SITUATION sheets apart so each situation is on its own slip and can be handed out. Depending on the size of your class, you may need duplicates of these slips.

Background:

These activities will help students understand empathy and reflect on the effects of empathetic listening.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Welcome your students with an energetic smile and enthusiasm. *When we talk about diversity, most people think of diversity in terms of culture, of countries, and of race. What about individual diversity? And, what happens when the majority of people see diversity as being equal to a minority? What happens when a majority of people see physical diversity as a handicap? Kids can be mean. Adults can be mean. Some people with handicaps become the targets of bullies. Rather than understand and appreciate an individual's diversity, some people will see it as an inconvenience to society or something to be judged in terms of right or wrong.*
2. *How many of you are left-handed? How many of you are right-handed? Let's try something: Using the paper and markers at your table, try writing your names with the opposite hand. Some might say the "wrong" hand. Try it at least five times. Wait for them to attempt this. How easy is it to do this? From the day we are born, we show a preference to use one hand or the other for certain tasks. Writing is one. Throwing a ball is another. The dominate hand is the right hand for most people. About one of every ten people is left-handed. Did you know that at one time, some schools forced left-handed people to write with their right hands? How would you feel about that today? Would it be right or wrong?, so to speak? Listen to the answers given by your students. Use this discussion to set the stage for the balance of this class. Is being left-handed a handicap? Pause to listen to any responses. Well, yes, it is. Most things are designed for right-handed people. It is rare that a product is designed to be adjusted or sold in a second model to accommodate left-handed people. These items include scissors and can openers. In sports, having a left-handed pitcher or batter or kicker can be a benefit simply because it sets up an unusual situation.*
3. *What if you are color blind? Do we have anyone who is color blind? Listen for responses. Being color blind means you may not see some colors very well. Some colors look faded and are easily confused with other colors. Someone who is color blind may not be able to tell if a traffic light is green or red. For this person, it is frustrating. Yet another person, such as the driver of the car behind, may view a color blind person as "stupid." Is this fair? Again, listen to the comments made by your students.*
4. *Disabilities are just that: They mean a person may not have all the abilities that you do. Guess what. We all*
"Diversity: It's What We Have In Common" ~ National Farmers Union Curriculum © ~ Section 4 ~ p. 2

have disabilities of some sort. You may not be able to sing in key or even read music. To a musician, you have a disability. You may not be able to tackle a running back. To a football player, you have a disability. You may not be good at math. To a brother or sister or parent or teacher who is good at math, you have a disability. Here's what we don't always realize. People with a disability in one area, often excel in other areas. Einstein was not a good student in grade school and a few of his teachers thought of him as difficult. It may be that he actually knew much more than them. Einstein simply did not do well in a traditional classroom setting. Imagine if he had been forced to do so. Instead, a few insightful educators understood Einstein would learn best in a different school setting. Today, history has established that Einstein was brilliant. But more than 100 years ago, some people thought he had a learning disability.

5. How are disabilities linked to diversity? In this case, diversity provided a different learning environment in which Einstein was able to succeed. Stephen Hawking has a disability known as ALS (think of last year's ice bucket challenge) which also is known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Hawking is paralyzed, limited to a wheelchair, and is able to talk using a speech generating device. Yet Hawking, like Einstein, is brilliant.
6. You may have heard that some colleges want diversity. They want people from different cultures and with different abilities. Diversity allows people to share different ideas and experiences. This kind of cross-pollination strengthens communities. It allows people to discover and use the best of each individual. America is a country that encouraged people to emigrate to the U.S. This brought together a diverse amount of abilities. In fact, Einstein came to America from Germany prior to World War II.
7. There is a link between diversity and disability in that each group may face difficulties just because they are different. And, each group seems to do well when the overall culture embraces empathy. What is empathy? See if your students can answer this question. Empathy is trying to walk in another person's shoes. It means we make a real effort to try to understand another person's situation. Empathy is different than sympathy, which means feeling sorry for someone but not really trying to understand what they are going through.
8. Disabilities can range from physical and emotional to economic and social. Some people may find social situations difficult. They have a hard time talking to people or being in crowds. They may be introverts, putting them in the minority. Most people are extroverts and extroverts can look down on introverts. They see introverts as shy. In the world of work, extroverts tend to hold more leadership jobs and make more money. Come to think of it, people who are taller also tend to make more money and hold more leadership jobs. Is this fair?
9. Think about this again: we have introverts and extroverts. That's diversity in terms of individual behavior, yet it carries over into culture. Extroverts tend to get all the attention and that's what works for them. If you are an extrovert, great. If you are an introvert, you are in good company: Bill Gates, J.K. Rowling, Abraham Lincoln, Christina Aguilera, Emma Watson, ob, and Einstein.
10. Today we can use all kinds of evaluations to figure out what each person's personality is and that gives us a sense of what kind of careers they will be most successful in and how they best learn. Some learn by reading, some by doing, and some by watching. This too is diversity.
11. So how do we develop awareness and understanding of diversity as it relates to disabilities? How do we develop empathy? How do we learn to walk in someone else's shoes? Let's start by filling out the *Are You Empathetic* worksheet. Allow your students time to fill out this worksheet. If you answered mostly "yes," you probably do a good job of showing empathy toward other people. The statements you answered "no" to are things you could do to be more empathetic.
12. Are you an empathetic listener? I will hand out situation slips to your tables. Pair up with a classmate and read your card aloud while your partner practices being an empathetic listener. Then, switch roles: practice being empathetic as your partner tells you what his or her character is experiencing. One way you can try to imagine what it feels like being in someone else's shoes is to ask yourself, "How would I feel in this situation?" How else can you try to understand how others feel? When you listen to others, making eye contact, not interrupting, and asking follow-up questions can show that you're making an effort to understand what they're going through. What can you do to be more attuned to other people's feelings? For instance, when you talk to your friends, how many "you" questions do you ask compared to the number of "I" statements you make?

13. Allow your students time to do this activity. When they are done, ask each pair to discuss their interaction and how it felt to tell and to listen.
14. *It's time for a snack.* Be sure to serve appropriate snacks and drinks. Allow your students time to enjoy their break.
15. *Let us return to diversity, disability, and empathy. I am going to pass out a sheet on which are three short stories of Diversity, Disability, Achievement. Read these stories. After you have done this, take time to talk about celebrities, family members, or other people you know or know of whose disabilities did not stop them from making a difference.* Allow your students time to do this task. When it appears they are done, ask them to give brief reports on the people they talked about and why those people overcame disabilities to achieve successes.
16. *Finally, we are going to do one more task. I am going to pass out an eye mask, crutches, or earmuffs to your table. One of you at each table has to use the device you get. The others have to figure out how to help this person go outside of this room, to the end of the hallway, and back. This is not a race. It is a test of how well you can show empathy for someone who lives with diversity and a disability every day. How will you communicate? Will it be with hand signals? With guidance? How do you build trust? How much do you help? Can you help too much?* Be sure to keep an eye (and ear) on your students. You want to make sure they take it seriously and that they keep safety in mind.
17. When your students are back in their chairs, ask them what they may have learned from this exercise. Listen to their responses.
18. *What I want you to gain from today's class is this: Diversity comes in many forms. Understanding it takes an open mind, and a willingness to use empathy to understand another person's situation. Would you treat a person with physical disabilities any differently if they were from Africa or Asia or Central America? Listen to their answers. What if they were Christian or Muslim or Hindu. person with disabilities final question: any difference if black or white, Christian or Muslim or Hindu? What if they were Catholic or Lutheran or Baptist? What if they were male or female? What if they were seven or 77 years old? Use these probing questions to encourage discussion on the true feelings about diversity that your students have.*
19. *Unfortunately, diversity and disability have a lot in common. Some people have no time for anyone who has a disability. Some people have no time for anyone who represents diversity. What we can do in our own lives is make sure we show understanding and empathy for individuals whose diversity has made them a target of anyone who doesn't like to deal with "different" people.*

–**Sources:** KnowledgeStorehouse; Teaching Tolerance

Are You Empathetic?

Read each item below. Circle “yes” if the statement describes you or “no” if it does not.

I often think about other people’s feelings. Yes No

I don’t make fun of other people because I can imagine what it feels like to be in their shoes. Yes No

I listen to others about what they’re going through. Yes No

I try to understand other people’s point of view. Yes No

I am aware that not everyone reacts to situations the same way I do. Yes No

SITUATION: All of Violet's friends are constantly talking about the prom—the dresses they're going to buy, how they're going to do their hair, where they're going to eat. Violet wants to go, but the dresses are expensive, and her mom just lost her job.

SITUATION: Sue always admired her friend Lucy's wardrobe. One day, when they were hanging out at Lucy's house, Sue asked to borrow Lucy's expensive blue sweater. Lucy said she could, but then made fun of Sue, telling everyone at school that Sue couldn't afford her own nice clothes.

SITUATION: Tim has worked at the same pizza place for over a year and has always done a great job. One day, he overcharged a customer by accident. The new boss thought Lenny did it on purpose to pocket the difference and fired him.

SITUATION: After practicing for months, Kelsey tripped and fell during her routine for the school talent show. One of her classmates, who was using a cellphone to videotape the show, posted the clip of Kelsey's fall on the Internet the next day.

SITUATION: Eric emailed Emily, admitting his crush on her. Emily forwarded the email to all of her friends, some of whom then teased Micah on a social networking site about his crush on Emily.

SITUATION: You overhear John joking about Nick because Nick is Hispanic. You like Nick yet John is popular and you do not want him making fun of you too.

SITUATION: Bill has asthma and has never been able to participate in sports. Several track stars make fun of Bill for being a weakling. You know he is an honor student who wants to fit in but the criticism he hears is causing him to do poorly in class.

Diversity, Disability, Achievement.

Stephen Hawking is one of the most well-known physicists in the world, and he was able to achieve that in spite of being diagnosed with ALS when he was 21. He can now only speak with the assistance of a computer and has been a fulltime powerchair-user since the 1980s. His disability however has never been an excuse to give up on his desire to study the universe, specifically the framework of general relativity and quantum mechanics. His best-selling work, *A Brief History of Time*, stayed on the Sunday Times bestsellers list for an astounding 237 weeks.

A beloved U.S. president who helped guide the nation successfully through World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt is considered a great president and the entire time he was in office, FDR was also a wheelchair-user. Upon starting his political career in 1928, he contracted polio while drinking water at a campground and became paralyzed from the waist down. Even though it wasn't made public until years later that he couldn't walk for fear of the public doubting his competency, FDR proved paralysis wasn't a roadblock to being a great leader.

Stevie Wonder is a musician, singer and songwriter who was born blind. He was born six weeks early. The blood vessels at the back of his eyes had not yet reached the front and aborted their growth, hence his blindness. Considered a child prodigy, Stevie signed with his first record label at age 11 and he's been performing since. Over his wildly successful music career, Stevie has recorded more than 30 U.S. top ten hits, including his singles "Superstition," "Sir Duke" and "I Just Called to Say I Love You."

Lesson 2: Scavenger Hunt

- Unit Objective:** Students will consider how diversity is both interwoven into their hometown's heritage and today's way of life.
- Grades:** 9-12
- Length:** 1 hour: 25 minutes for the scavenger hunt, 10 minutes for snacks, 25 minutes for discussion.
- Materials Needed:** Copies of the **Scavenger Hunt** and **Discussion** worksheets, markers, clipboards.
- Preparation:** A classroom with a whiteboard or flipchart and tables (preferably round). You will want to know a few basics about your hometown, such as when it was formed, what early life was like, and where people moved from to settle the area.

Background:

This lesson uses a scavenger hunt to encourage students to seek out diversity as it relates to culture in their hometown. This is not to be an all-inclusive look at community diversity. The lessons will challenge students to discuss some ways in which their hometown is always changing and the variety of people and places that make it unique. Although this could be done entirely in a classroom with a city directory (boring), it is best done with students walking outside through a few blocks of their local neighborhood. Depending on the size of your class and the overall environment of your neighborhood, you may want to enlist the help of volunteers. Finally, while this appears to be an easy lesson, it does require students to be active participants in discussion and will succeed only if the instructor can inspire and encourage students to provide the answers based on their observations.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Greet your students with obvious enthusiasm and excitement. *Our hometown has always been here from the beginning of time and never changes, right?* Listen to the answers offered by your students.
2. *Here's what I do know. Our town has been around since* (fill in a few appropriate facts and comments). *Our town also represents a diverse heritage. Put another way, our town represents diversity. The people who first lived here are long gone. Some moved away, others passed away but some of their descendants still live here. Businesses have come and gone. We are going to break into teams and take a few notes about the diversity that surrounds us.* (**NOTE:** Teams should be comprised of about six students, depending on your overall class size.) *I am going to give you scavenger hunt sheets and 15 minutes to go outside, walk down the streets to look for examples, and return with your answers. Use common sense and safety during this time.* Hand each group one clipboard along with the **Scavenger Hunt** worksheet and a marker. If possible, assign a chaperon to each group. (**NOTE:** If you are not in a location for which this activity is practical, you may use a city history book, city directory, Yellow Pages, or Internet access to provide potential answers. Alternatively, you may print out signs, ads, and photos and place them around your classroom.)
3. While your students are doing this, set up appropriate drinks and snacks for when they return. As your students do return, invite them to pick up a snack and drink. When all your

"Diversity: It's What We Have In Common" ~ National Farmers Union Curriculum © ~ Section 4 ~ p. 8

teams are back and done with their snacks, resume your class activities.

4. *Let's look at our sheets. I will ask each group to tell me what they found for answers. Start with one table and ask them to report their findings. Move on to the next tables until each group has made a report.*
5. *What does this mean for our town? Let's think about it. Many towns began with a small concentration of people who all came from a similar background. The founders may have been from German or England or Mexico or China or Russia. When they came to America, these people brought their own unique cultures with them. Over time, however, those cultures began to blend with those of people from other backgrounds. And new traditions were introduced along the way. In the past 100 or 200 or 300 years, communities have become much different than what they were like when they started. Yes some traces of the original culture may still be found.*
6. *We no longer have stables for horses, but they were common 100 years ago. We no longer have a general store, but they were common 60 years ago. We no longer have a dime store, but they were common 30 years ago. (You may have a dollar store, which will allow you to draw some comparisons). Each generation experiences a new sense of culture based on what is happening around them. Today people have cell phones. Just 15 years ago, cell phones were not common and they were just that: phones use to make calls. No one used a cell phone to watch movies, listen to music, or for mapping programs.*
7. *What examples of significant changes did you see when you were on your scavenger hunt? Listen to their answers?*
8. Go up to the white board and write: What makes our town unique? Do we have certain celebrations or events that are unlike those of neighboring communities? Have any bigger businesses closed or open in the past 50 years that changed our community? If we moved away, what would we miss most? *Take five to ten minutes to discuss and answer these questions.*
9. Once it appears your students have completed this task, ask them by table what they discovered. Use their comments to build on the conversation about hometown culture and also invite comments from students at other tables. The main purpose of this discussion is for your students to be aware of and appreciate the historical and cultural uniqueness of where they live.
10. Close the class by asking each student to share with you one community cultural value that is important to him or her.

– Source: KnowledgeStorehouse

Diversity Scavenger Hunt

A business that has been around for three generations

A restaurant that serves ethnic foods

Most families living here immigrated from where

An old sign or name at the top of a building

A large business in our town

A small business in our town

Our school is named after

The most modern service or store we have is

The biggest example of diversity we found is

Lesson 3: Let's Talk It Out

Unit Objective: Students will appreciate how their own diversity makes them unique and why it also requires them to see and appreciate the diversity in others.

Grades: 9-12

Length: 1 hour: 25 minutes for the first activity, 10 minutes for snacks, 25 minutes for the second activity.

Materials Needed: A classroom with a white board or flip chart, and tables and chairs. You will need multicolored markers, copies of the **Quote** and both **Venn Diagram** worksheets.

Preparation: In advance, make sure you have printed out copies of the three worksheets.

Background:

Students may not realize their personal tastes are changing because of diversity in their lives. This lesson will help them understand why people are as similar as they are different, and how that opens the door to embracing diversity in principle and in practice. This lesson challenges students to think analytically about their own preferences and those of others.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Greet your students with enthusiasm and a smile. *Have you heard that first impressions are the most important? Is this true?* Allow your students to offer responses to this question. *What is a first impression? Is it just looking at someone? Listening to them talk? Going on a date with them? Spending a week at camp?* Again, let them offer responses, which will set the stage for the upcoming lesson.
2. *Is a first impression fair?* Listen to what your students say.
3. *Did you know a Decca Records executive said in 1962 that the band he just heard audition had no future in show business and had a sound that was on its way out.* The band was The Beatles. So, was this first impression all that important? No.
4. *Let's think about this a minute. I will pass a quote to each of you. Take a few minutes in your group to discuss this quote. Is it valid? If so, why? And make sure every person at your table has a chance to offer his or her thoughts.* Distribute copies of the **Quote** to each student.
5. *Well, what do you think? Do our tastes change over time? Is this because we become more aware of the diversity in our lives, from music to food?* Let your students offer their thoughts. *Have you noticed that at the age of five we really like, say, orange pop, but now we prefer Coke? The flavor of the soda pop did not change, but our tastes did.*
6. Pass out the Venn Diagram worksheet and colored markers to your students. I want you to work in pairs and use a single sheet. *Each of you needs to use a different colored marker. Write your first name over one circle and your partner will write his or her first name over the other circle. Discuss these topics. If you both agree to the first one, place an A in the Using the list below, place an "A" in the Same area where the circles overlap, using you're the same colored marker. If you do not agree, use your own colored marker and write the answer in your own circle. Obviously, you will have some areas that overlap and some that are unique to just you.* Allow your students time to work through this activity.
7. After your students are done with this activity, ask them how much or how little they have in common. *Why is it important to recognize individual and group similarities and differences in our schools, our families, and our communities?* Listen to their responses. *When we have differences, does that mean one way is right and another is wrong? If I like Domino's Pizza and you like Wendy's hamburgers, is one of*

"Diversity: It's What We Have In Common" ~ National Farmers Union Curriculum © ~ Section 4 ~ p. 11

us right? Of course not. What about eye color? Is brown better than blue? Is brown worse than blue? What about hazel? Do you have friends with either eye color? Makes you think, doesn't it. What are your thoughts? Pause to listen. We could do this activity for any number of topics. In many ways, we use this type of diagram in our minds when we meet new friends, ask someone out on a date, decide to join a team, or apply for a job. What makes us unique also makes us special. What we have in common makes us comfortable. We all seek a measure of each. Ask your students if they have additional comments. If they do, use them to build conversation on this topic.

8. *It's time for a snack.* Be sure to serve appropriate snacks and drinks for this age group. Allow your students enough time to enjoy this break and, hopefully, to continue the discussion about similarities and differences. When you believe the time is right, resume your lesson.
9. *What is more important, our differences or similarities? Don't answer. I will pass out a sheet with these questions, along with a few others for you to discuss in your groups.* You will have 10 minutes to consider these questions and come up with answers.
10. At the end of ten minutes, ask each of your groups to report on how they answered the questions. Look for opportunities to engage students from other groups in discussing the findings.
11. *Are you more likely or less likely to want to be with someone whose interests are the same as yours? Are you less likely to trust someone whose interests are different than yours? If so, does that say more about you than about the other person? Facilitate a discussion on this topic.*
12. Pass out the second **Venn Diagram** worksheet, the one without questions. *Pair up again, this time with someone new. You will have five minutes to learn more about each other. One of you will go first, sharing an interest of yours, such as, I like cats. You both will mark your diagram together to see if you share this in common or if it is an individual interest. Go back and forth this way for ten questions. Let's see what you may have in common.* Give your students a few moments to do this.
13. *Who thinks they have the most in common?* See who raises their hands and ask them *Why? What things did you have in common? Does this mean this (or these) teams are more compatible? Or does it mean they asked questions that are more common? Asking if you like ice cream is pretty obvious. Asking if you like black-and-white monster movies from the 1950s is a little more specific. Such an interest is less likely to be common and more likely to draw two people together in conversation.*
14. *Diversity shows up everywhere, in entertainment, in art, and in music. It shows up in careers and education and internships. It shows up in cars and clothes and computers. The question is, how do you balance your own interests with those of people who may not share any overlapping interests? How to do you balance the rights of people whose values are different than your own? Here's how.* Write down the capital letters C, A, R, E in top to bottom on the white board. Pause, then complete the words Collaboration, Acceptance, Respect, and Empathy behind each capital letter.
15. *The acronym is C.A.R.E. The way to accomplish it is to use collaboration, meaning we work together for the common good. We need to use acceptance, meaning just because we have a different point of view on a topic doesn't mean it about being right or wrong. We need to have respect for another individual's different choices and values. And, we have to use empathy, the ability to step into another person's shoes and understand his or her point of view.*

– **Sources:** KnowledgeStorehouse; West Virginia Department of Education

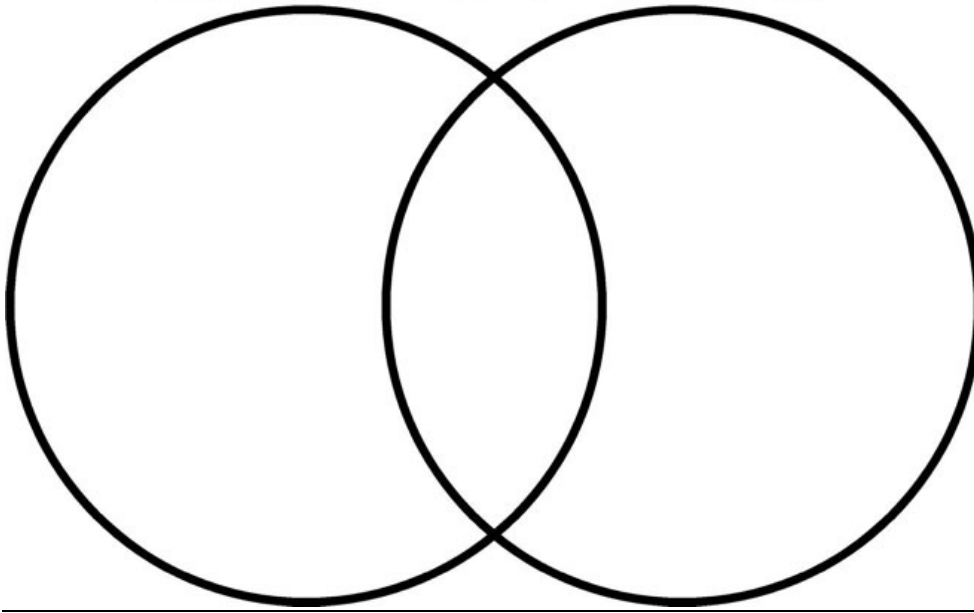
Quote

“I don’t know if you’ve ever noticed this, but first impressions are often entirely wrong. You can look at a painting for the first time, for example, and not like it at all, but after looking at it a little longer you may find it very pleasing. The first time you try Gorgonzola cheese you may find it too strong, but when you are older you may want to eat nothing but Gorgonzola cheese. Your initial opinion on just about anything may change over time.”

– Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*

VENN DIAGRAM

Different ***Same*** ***Different***



Compare and contrast the following:

- a) Eyes color, b) hair color, c) older/younger, d) tallest/ shortest, e) gender,
- f) favorite food, g) favorite music, h) favorite type of sports, i) favorite movie
- j) favorite pet, k) favorite TV program, l) favorite school subject, m) small family,
- n) likes shopping, o) like pickups,
- p) dislikes getting feelings hurt, r) likes humor and peace.

Q&A

What is the value of similarities?

What is the value of differences?

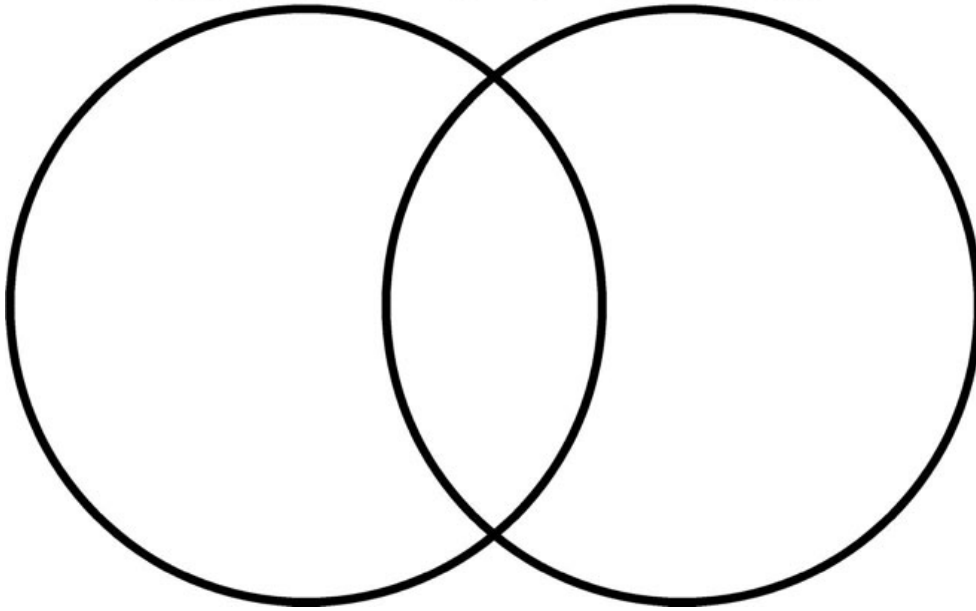
Explain how we are all as similar as we are different.

List and describe some evident similarities and differences existing among us.

How might we discover more about each other's similarities and differences?

VENN DIAGRAM

Different ***Same*** ***Different***



Lesson 4: A Different Point Of View

Unit Objective: To allow students to understand how different points of view, and how different cultural approaches may lead down different paths but to the same destinations.

Grades: 9-12

Length: 1 hour: 25 minutes for the first activity, 10 minutes for snacks, 25 minutes for the second activity.

Materials Needed: A white board or flipchart. A classroom equipped with tables. Scissors, glue sticks, markers, and a small ball such as a tennis or ping pong ball. This room needs either an open area in which to hold one activity, or space to allow you to move tables to one side of the room. You will need numerous boxes of the same size (think Hammermill boxes), which may be provided free by a print shop or office supply store or school. You will need tag board and tape, as well as a world globe (desktop model). Also, you will need to secure travel posters, photos, materials, and other images or icons for at least 10 countries and preferably enough so each student in your class has unique country from which to draw a point of view (these materials may be found at travel agencies, libraries, in travel magazines, and on websites. Also, go to <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries.html> and print out one fact sheet for each student (an option exists to convert these pages to PDF files which can be printed on standard letter size paper). The countries you choose need to match the ones you have acquired materials for. Be sure to choose a few well-known countries (U.S., Canada, Mexico, Germany, Japan, Russia) as well as a few lesser known countries (Iceland, Egypt, Kenya, Venezuela). You will want a “tool kit” consisting of a fact sheet and supporting materials for each country to put in the hands of each student. **NOTE:** Because of the number of countries available, it would be space prohibitive to include a fact sheet for every country listed on the Science Kids website. Also, this allows each state to adjust for its own historical cultural backgrounds as well as current events. These pages may be provided by a community or school library.

Preparation: This lesson can work with as few as three students or as many as 20. It is important that you have enough materials to assure each student has his or her own “station” at the discussion circle. While the activity below is not demanding, it does require a bit of advance planning and preparation. Place a “tool kit” and tag board at each seat before the class begins.

Background:

Students in this age group will consider foreign cultures based on their own frames of reference, as well as due to gross generalizations. The Middle East may be confusing to your students due to news reports of terrorism. Japan and Korea are sources of cars and computers. Russia is big and cold. South America is home to drug lords and jungles. Africa is barren and inhospitable. The purpose of

“Diversity: It’s What We Have In Common” ~ National Farmers Union Curriculum © ~ Section 4 ~ p. 17

this course is to get your students to rethink how they see other countries as having distinct cultures, and how other countries may view America.

Teaching Strategy:

1. *Here's a simple fact: We are all from somewhere else. Well, to be more accurate, our family trees are not rooted in America. Our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and the generations before them came here from somewhere else. Many came from Europe by immigrating more than a century ago. Some of us may have family trees that go back before the United States was really united as a new nation. We have moved around the country. During the Depression of the 1930s, a lot of people packed up and moved to where they might find work. The point is, diversity is a way of life for America. However, Americans sometimes think their view of the world is right, which leaves other countries on the outside. Every culture has its own benefits and its own qualities, plus a few quirks.*
2. *We are going to learn more about considering other points of view on a global scale. In front of you are materials on a specific country, as well as a Country Fact sheet. Your task is to read the Fact Sheet to learn more about "your" country. You will want to think about how people in this country live and what might be important to them. Is there climate hot and dry or cold and wet or in between? Do they have lots of farms or is food production difficult for them? What are the neighboring countries like? Next, I want you to make a poster about this country using the tag board, marker, and images from the materials in front of you. Cut out images of people and places and glue them to your tag board. In fact, I want you to make two tag board posters. This is not a race, so do not rush to get this done. This is a learning activity, so take time to get to know this country better. Make sure you write the name of your country on each poster. Allow them time to work on this project.*
3. *When you are done, tape your tag board posters to the sides of one of these boxes, with one poster on either side.*
16. *It's time for snacks.* Be sure to serve appropriate snacks and drinks. While your students are enjoying their break, set up boxes in a circular pattern in the open area of your classroom. Place the globe inside the circle of boxes.
17. Ask your students to stand in front of their "box" in the circle. Your students will be in a circle facing toward each other. They will be able to see the posters on the inside of the circle just across from where they are standing.
18. As the facilitator, you will encourage your students to ask questions of each other regarding each student's country. That student will need to do his or her best to answer as if they were actually from that country. *We will begin by tossing a ball from student to student. The student who has the ball can ask one question of any other country here. Once the answer is given, the ball has to be tossed to another student who then will ask the next question. Here are a few example questions: What is something you do in your country that we do not do in America? You may want to ask questions about sports, entertainment, food, economics, tourism, and geography. And, you are free to use your facts sheets to help you come up with a response.* Toss the ball to a student to begin this activity. Depending on the size of your group, this activity may run its course in five or ten minutes. If so, pause; then tell your students to step it up with a rapid fire round during which they have to ask and answer questions as quickly as possible.
19. *What's in the middle of our circle? A globe. Although citizens of other nations may have much different ways of doing things, in the end we all are working toward the same goals. Whether you are in the U.S., France, Korea, India, Senegal, or Peru, you want to live in safe communities and access to education. You want security and economic opportunities and jobs. Diversity means we have a lot of ways to live our lives, from the food we eat to the entertainment we like. Yet in the end we have a lot in common.*
20. *For our final discussion, let's talk about how Americans view the world, and how the world views Americans. Who wants to begin?* Use this as an open discussion. Also, help your students think beyond this moment in time. What did the world think of America during World War II? What did the world think of the U.S. during the Iraq/Afghanistan war? What about the U.S. landing on the moon. What do Americans think of other countries such as Japan or Russia

or Mexico or India.

21. Finally, ask your students what cultural factors are most important: economic wealth, entertainment and sports, inventions, military strength, or something else.
22. *Take one more look at the globe. It's one world for us. We have different cultures and countries, but we have just one world. We need to appreciate what we have here in America. We also need to appreciate that other countries have their own way of doing things. Diversity is what makes the world go around.*

—**Sources:** KnowledgeStorehouse; Science Kids

Optional Activities

The following activities could be incorporated at the end of any lesson to fill extra time.

1. Have your students prepare a community diversity tag board poster and place it in a hometown cooperative, the library, grocery store, or another appropriate location. The poster would be based on the scavenger hunt in Lesson 2.

"Diversity: It's What We Have In Common" ~ National Farmers Union Curriculum © ~ Section 4 ~ p. 19

2. Use examples of music or ethnic foods to describe.
3. Using chalk on pavement or markers on a white board, encourage your students to create new Venn Diagrams (Lesson 2) based on topics of importance to them.
4. Teach some Farmers Union songs.