

SCHOOL KIT #2: EQUALLY DIFFERENT



open minds

School kits to help the next generation
embrace diversity

Equally Different

It's never too early to start teaching children about tolerance, understanding and open-mindedness. The sooner they learn to respect and embrace diversity, the sooner they will understand that we are all equally different and how important it is for individual growth - and our world.

Research shows that by the time children are 3 they understand the concept of stereotypes and can recognise obvious discrimination. From the age of 6, they can understand that some people may be prejudiced towards them and by 10, they are able to recognise even subtle signs of discrimination.

Equally Different is a simple activity that helps children learn about discrimination, how important it is to recognise it when we see it - and how simple it is to change. The activity shows that when we stereotype people, we can unintentionally reinforce behaviour - even if it's not actually reflective of that person.

By being physically labelled, children will be able to experience what it's like to be put in a box. Even though it's only for a short period, the activity demonstrates the fact that we are all different people and that nobody should be put in a box.

Unlabel

It's very important to make clear that labelling people isn't necessarily anyone's fault: it's natural for all of us to put people into categories based on what we know about them - it's never done maliciously. The crucial thing is to be able to realise when we've put a label on a person - and to be able to take that label off.

The goal of this activity is to heighten awareness and sensitivity around labels and stereotypes, not to create or reinforce them. It demonstrates how easy it is to treat someone in a certain way, but also shows how that person might start to mirror the way they're treated.

We are not born racist, prejudiced and hateful. We are born curious, tolerant and open-minded! The sooner we start to teach children about these issues the sooner they are able to embrace diversity and see a person for who they really are.

CISV and momondo share a mutual interest in creating more tolerance between people and cultures across the world. We have a vision of an open world, where differences are a source of inspiration, not prejudice

How it works

Make sure that your class understands what a label is before you begin. A simple definition is: labelling is describing someone or something in a word or short phrase e.g. 'John is lazy', or 'Anne is always so happy'.

The aim of this activity is to start a discussion about labelling; how we all do it, how it makes us feel and how it can easily be damaging to us and people around us. To help the children discover their labels, they will complete a short task (below). The completion of this is not the primary goal, the discussion afterwards is, so it's OK if they don't finish the task,

At the end, the class should take the time to talk about how they felt, and write down their feelings. Did it make them feel put in a box? Did they feel as if they couldn't be themselves?

The activity has a suggested time of 60 minutes, but it can of course be tailored to your class and schedule. The activity is easy to set up. Just follow the steps below:

1. Split the class up into 4 to 7 groups so everyone has a chance to speak
2. Write down as many labels as there are children in each group (e.g. careful, leader, talkative, sensitive, joker, brainy, hyper, sporty, creative)
3. Put a label on each child - but don't let them see their own label!
4. Give each group a Trip Task sheet and give them 30 minutes to plan the trip. Tell each group to treat each other as if they were their label. The Trip Task is given to each group so that they have something set to discuss and let them start to treat each other as their labels
5. At the end, everyone sits down, guesses their label and takes it off
6. When everyone has guessed, hand out the question sheets for them to stick their labels on and answer the questions. Once they've answered the questions they can, it's a good idea to discuss what they wrote, and how they felt

Suggested discussion questions

1. Can you think of any time you were labelled in real life?
2. Why do you think it's so easy for people to label each other?
3. Do you think it's easy for people to break out of their label and start being themselves?

We're all equally different!

At the end of the activity, the class can hang their activity sheets on the classroom wall so they remember that everyone is equally different!



About Open Minds

Open Minds is an educational programme by momondo, an inspirational travel search site. In collaboration with CISV International, a global non-profit organisation dedicated to educating and inspiring action for peace, schools and teachers, we have developed activities that will help children understand the importance of mutual respect and openness.

The activities are aimed at children aged 10 to 15, as they are still open to new concepts and ideas, but old enough to be able to fully comprehend the extent and importance of the issues addressed.

We started the collaboration with CISV because we share a vision of an open world, where our differences are a source of inspiration, and where intercultural meetings create more understanding in the world.

For more information, please visit letsopenourworld.com.

momondo

momondo is a inspirational travel search site comparing billions of cheap flights, hotels and car hire deals, giving users complete price transparency across the market. We believe that everyone should be able to travel the world because we know that crossing borders and travelling makes us more open-minded and tolerant.

We are a purpose driven company that kick-started a global conversation about the importance of breaking down boundaries with The DNA Journey, a short non-fiction film seen more than 300 million times. Through our purpose platform, Let's Open Our World, we're able to continue the conversation, engaging with people who share a common vision of an open world and encouraging the pursuit of peace through curiosity, open-mindedness and tolerance.

CISV

Founded over 60 years ago, CISV International is a global organisation with member associations in 70 countries around the world. Together, they are dedicated to educating and inspiring for peace through building inter-cultural friendship, cooperation and understanding. CISV offers an exciting blend of seven fun, non-formal peace education 'learning by doing' programmes, beginning with their original and unique Village programmes for 11-year-olds.

By educating the next generation and through building intercultural friendships based on cooperation and understanding, CISV aims to help children and youth develop the skills they need to become informed, responsible and active global citizens, able to make a positive difference in their communities and the world.