

Ten Ideas for Observing the International Day for Tolerance

16 November

1. Diversity in Your Community

Wherever you live, the wide diversity of your community will probably surprise you. It has been said that a culture is the sum total of all the influences that a region has undergone. Undertake an investigative project on cultural diversity in your town or community. Who lives there? How do they live? Articles, interviews, posters or displays can be designed to highlight the range of identities and cultures. How is this diversity demonstrated in music? Reflect on the number of traditions of music and dance you've come across, and the mutual influences they show. Organize a concert or cultural festival that brings together a range of cultural traditions.

2. Human Rights

How are the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other promoted and protected? Do you find that your law-enforcement officials are adequately educated about human rights? What can you do to improve attitudes or behaviour toward minorities?

3. Do-It-Yourself Tolerance Program

Write your own tolerance curriculum or program. This means deciding what the component parts of tolerance are, and how you think tolerance, and how you think tolerant values can best be transmitted. Scrutinise your text books and televisions, newspapers and magazines for stereotyping, including gender typing and assumptions about nationalities and ethnic groups. What are the tolerance priorities for your town, country or region?

4. No to Violence

How does violence come into a community, school or home, and how can it be stopped? Act out the dynamics of tolerance and intolerance through role playing, dialogue, dilemma solving. Organize public debates, take sides in a debate, and then switch sides and speak for the opposite position. How do you imagine peaceful co-existence of diverse individuals and groups? What makes it work, and what undermines it?

5. Ecological Diversity and Human Diversity

Every community is based on interdependence. Like the plants and animals, we couldn't survive if we were all the same. What are some examples of this truth drawn from daily life in your town? What are concrete examples of how a culture of peace and tolerance can promote environmental preservation? Start a project in your school or neighbourhood.

6. Religious Tolerance

Organise an event, with the participation of different religious and non-religious groups in your community, to discuss how tolerance is taught by these communities. How is tolerance taught by the different religions of the world, including the traditions of indigenous peoples? Each of them, in its own way, is founded on love and justice, and cannot be used to justify violence or war. Dialogue and discussion between representatives of many religious groups is a tradition that goes back centuries, and is still valuable today.

7. Current Events

Organise discussions about current events in relation to tolerance and intolerance. Analyse actual conflicts of the past and present. How might they have been resolved or avoided? How is the issue of human rights in the news today? What are the fundamental rights and freedoms recognised by the international community? How do multi-cultural, multi-linguistic countries work? What are the common interests that diverse peoples share?

8. Sports and Tolerance

What are the international sporting events, and what is their purpose? What are the possible links between sports and intolerance (such as exclusion of those unable to compete, competitive sexism and violence) and how may these be remedied? Organise an athletic event around the theme of diversity and tolerance

9. Creativity at Work

Art speaks volumes. Examine the work of an artist from another region of the world. What does it communicate to you? Create short stories, plays, poems, songs, articles, paintings, posters, photographs, or videos elucidating the themes of tolerance, and publish or distribute them. Write letters to prominent people, asking questions and communicating your views on the subject of tolerance.

10. International Link-ups

Start an international conversation or school-pairing project, by mail or computer. Write to others in another country about issues and problems you face in your lives. Exchange audio cassettes or pictures. Explore the possibilities of participating in international summer camps or student exchanges. Ask your school to join UNESCO's Associated School Projects.

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