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## Introduction

We live in a world rich in diversity. We are people who look different, live in different types of houses, eat different types of food, appreciate different types of art, wear different types of clothes, and behave in different ways. Yet with our differences, we are in many ways very much the same. We all want to feel a sense of belonging, of caring, and to be valued for being ourselves.

*Celebrating Diversity* recognizes these feelings. Its unique extended theme format can be used throughout the school year. The units may be rearranged if a different order suits your needs. Each of the units of

celebration can in themselves become a school month of study, rich in activities, hands-on experiences, and the building of self-esteem.

The lessons in this book will provide both students and teachers alike an opportunity to share and relish their unique diversity. Through the use of this book students will begin to value their own uniqueness as citizens of the world. They will begin to develop an understanding of the rich diversity of cultures around the world and their contributions to the richness of our lives.

## Using an Extended Thematic Unit

Themes can be as short as one day in length or last an entire school year. Although the duration of a theme is an individual choice, *Celebrating Diversity* has been designed to take you through an entire school year. How you use the extended theme in this book will depend greatly on your comfort level with thematic teaching.

Also provided are sub-themes that connect with the central theme of *Celebrating Diversity*. They allow for flexibility. Except for "Celebrating Values," any of the themes may be exchanged for another, so you may use them in the order that is appropriate for you and your individual school calendar.

# Celebrating Values, Trust, and Personal Awareness

Begin the introduction of the extended theme by celebrating values, trust, and personal awareness. Give children the opportunity to explore more about who they are and which values are important in their lives. Explain that trust is an important aspect of getting along, and essential to making the school year a pleasant one. Let each child celebrate that he or she is a unique individual, with feelings that should be respected and valued.

Set up this unit by creating a display board. A display board that incorporates the children makes them immediately feel a part of the learning. Suggestions for display boards are given on page 4.

You might wish to read some books that let children hear about diversity in people. See the bibliography on page 86 for some titles.

Work with students to complete the activities in this section. Each lesson that you teach contains a goal. Choose those that are appropriate for your students. They do not have to be completed in any specific order.

Some of the activities, such as the “Coat of Arms” and the calendar, lend themselves to be displayed and will involve children. Make sure that students get to know each other. Complete the “Getting to Know You” interviews. If you opt to videotape them, it will be easy to spread them out over a day or a week. Build trust and personal awareness with the “Bean Bag Balance” and “Car and Driver.” Regardless of which lessons you choose to undertake with your class, remember to celebrate the children and their learning. This can be as simple as praising them for a job well done or as elaborate as planning a class party.

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# Display Board Ideas

## Silhouettes

Cover a notice board with construction paper or butcher's paper. Then trace the silhouette of a child's head onto the paper. Do this using a light source such as a slide projector. Have each child sit in front of a projector, and then trace his or her profile onto the paper. Cut a group of silhouettes in a rainbow of colors. Arrange on the notice board, overlapping an arc. Decide on a title for the display. Possible titles might include "Good Times Come in Different Colors" or "This is Australia."



## Full-House Graph

Use a notice board to create a Full-House Graph. On a large strip of paper write the question, "How Many Are in My Family?" Under the question place a graph. This can easily be created on a board using wool to make rows. Label the rows, 1, 2, 3, to 10 or more. Give each child a square of paper or a sticky note on which to write his or her name. Or, if you wish to keep the rows for each number the same color, have several squares of the same color and have children tell you the number of family members before giving them their paper. For each day of the first week the board is up, have a few children place the squares with the family name in the correct row.

### Extension:

Tally the numbers in each group. What does the graph reveal about the number of people in someone's family? Which group has the largest, and which group has the smallest? Challenge the children to tell you what things they have learned from the graph.

# Getting to Know You

- Goal:** To provide an opportunity for students to get to know each other.
- Materials:** Paper, pencils, interview questions on page 6, (optional: video camera)
- Directions:** Pair students with a partner they do not know well. Give each student an interview sheet. Review the questions with the students. Have each take a turn asking or interviewing his or her partner for approximately 10-15 minutes. Each should record his or her partner's responses to questions on the interview sheet.
- Extensions:** Rather than sharing each set of interviews with the class, videotape each set of partners. (A parent volunteer would be helpful for this task.) Show the video at different times during the week. This would also work well as an opening activity; show a few of the interviews at the start of each day.



# Interview Questions

Ask your partner these questions. Write down the answer.

What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

When is your birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

How many brothers do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

How many sisters do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a pet? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you tell me about your pet? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you like to play? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope to be when you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Add some questions of your own on the back of this page.