

Tolerance



SECTION 1 Introduce Tolerance

This curriculum offers approximately 3 hours of instruction, divided into 3 sections. Each section can be broken into smaller pieces if you prefer short lessons. For additional resources, visit www.CharacterFirstEd.com.

3 WAYS TO BUILD TOLERANCE:

Educate

Focus on tolerance for a period of time. Use the lessons in this curriculum to talk about tolerance and why it matters. Look for ways to emphasize tolerance in other subjects, such as math, reading, language, history, social studies, science, music, health, and athletics.

Evaluate

Think about daily decisions in the light of good character. Ask yourself and your students, "Is this the right thing to do?" Use the "I Wills" on page 4 as behavioral objectives, and refer to these standards when correcting negative attitudes and behavior.

Celebrate

Catch people doing good and point out the character qualities they demonstrated. Children thrive on sincere encouragement, so don't overlook the little opportunities to praise each day!

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Dr. Virginia Smith, president, Character First Ed.
Allison Fahrenbruck, writer
Ashley Glueck, layout and design

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DEFINE TOLERANCE (Discussion, 15 minutes)

**Point out and discuss key words in the definition.
Review and commit the definition to memory.**

Definition: *Showing respect for others who are different than me*

The word tolerance comes from the Latin verb *tolerare*, meaning "to bear." To bear something means to carry a weight or to continue on in the face of pain or irritation. There are two times in particular when tolerance is very important—one is looking past character flaws and bearing with those who irritate you, the other is being respectful and understanding of the differences between people.

Tolerance towards others can be difficult. Sometimes it means being kind and respectful to the people who are really irritating. Being tolerant does not mean you must accept disrespectful or bad attitudes. But being a tolerant person does mean encouraging good character in others and yourself. An important aspect of tolerance is learning to listen carefully before reacting. By taking time to choose your response, you develop patience.

Demonstrating tolerance is a choice. Even though we cannot control the actions of others, we can still choose to show kindness and respect. Learning to appreciate another's point-of-view, even when there's disagreement, makes it easier to be tolerant. Treat others the way you would like to be treated.

Remember that differences between people can be cultural, religious, opinions, age, experiences, or other things. It is the wide variety of people we meet that make life more interesting. A tolerant person respects the differences in people while seeking to connect with and understand others.

Related concepts:

Respect, patience, acceptance, empathy, friendliness, perseverance, kindness

Discussion:

- Have you ever been in a situation where someone got angry with you because you disagreed with them? How did it feel?
- How do you think tolerance can help you in school and at home?
- Describe a time you listened carefully and tried to understand someone else's perspective before reacting.
- What are some ways to evaluate if something is right or just popular?

"Everybody thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself." —Leo Tolstoy



Additional resources at
www.CharacterFirstEd.com



WEB OF APPRECIATION

(Activity, 20 minutes)

Part of developing tolerance is learning to recognize and appreciate the good in others. This activity will give each person the chance to give and to receive a sincere compliment.

Ask the class to stand in a large circle with you. Tell them you are going to throw the ball of yarn to someone in the circle, and when you throw it, you will say something nice about that person to which you threw the yarn ball. It might go like this: "I'm going to throw the yarn to Derek, and I appreciate how Derek holds the door open for others." Be sure you keep holding the loose end of the yarn so there is now a "connection" between you and Derek.

Then it becomes Derek's turn to throw the yarn and compliment someone else, while holding his part of the yarn, thus making another connection between Derek and the next person. This continues until everyone has a chance to catch and throw the yarn at least one time.

When you finish, point out how "connected" the class is by giving and receiving sincere compliments and learning to appreciate each other. Point out that even though every single one of you is different in some way, you are still able to build relationships by learning to appreciate the things that make each one special.

Supplies:

- Space to form a large circle of people
- 1 large ball of yarn

SPECIAL HELPERS

(Interactive, 1 hour)

Part of being tolerant is learning to respectfully interact with everyone with whom we come in contact. Physical differences should not get in the way of building relationships with other people. Set a date that your class could visit a Special Education class. Assign a project that your student could work on with a student in that

class. Projects could include reading a book, doing a craft together, helping with schoolwork, or just being a friend. Projects should be done on a one-on-one basis if possible to allow the students the most time to interact. At the end of the day, the class members could come together and share what they learned with one another. Bring cookies or other appropriate snacks to share with both classes so they have time to just spend some fun time together as they learn about appreciating each other and practicing tolerance.



Tolerance



Showing respect for others
who are different than me

SECTION 2 Practice Tolerance

Reinforcing Tolerance

Tolerance is not always an easy concept to learn. The world is full of ideas, people with different cultures and backgrounds, and varying family traditions. It is important to learn how to communicate and build relationships in a respectful manner. One of the best ways for students to learn is to be able to recognize moments that they or someone around them showed tolerance in everyday life. Remember to praise individuals for specific times they chose tolerance over prejudice and harshness.



Here are some examples to look for:

- A student chooses to listen carefully rather than to interrupt even when they disagree with someone they are talking to (it could be about a popular music band, how to do a project, or anything that prompts discussion).
- A student chooses to be respectful rather than to make fun of someone from a different culture.
- A student actively seeks to connect with the people around them and learn about their cultural and/or religious backgrounds—and is careful to be understanding.
- A student disagrees with another student in a calm and courteous manner.

I WILL... (Discussion, 25 minutes)

1. Listen to others.

It is important to get all the facts before forming a conclusion. Be respectful of others. Listen to their side of the story.

- How does it make you feel when someone listens to you instead of judging before they know the whole story?
- What role does patience play in listening and being tolerant?

2. Remember that not everyone is the same.

Tolerance means being aware of the many differences between people—including their background, culture, age, etc.—appreciating those differences, and being respectful and kind rather than harsh and judgemental.

- What are some ways you can show respect even when you don't agree with someone?
- How do you feel when someone cares about you no matter the differences between you?

3. Look for ways to connect with others.

Even though you may not understand someone else's experiences, be open to learning. When someone else's habits or actions are irritating you, discover ways to show them you care and to defuse the situation. Connecting with another person builds bridges of tolerance even if you disagree.

- Being respectful and kind is not easy. What are some ways to set aside a disagreement and find common ground?
- What cultures are represented in your classroom? Practice asking respectful questions so that you can learn more about each culture.

4. Know the difference between what is "popular" and what is "right."

It is easy to feel pressured into doing what is popular. Being tolerant does not mean you accept everything or always do what your friends want.

- Have you ever had to choose to do the right thing rather than what your friends wanted? Share about the situation and what you chose to do.
- Demonstrate how you might respectfully disagree with a classmate or friend.

5. Help others, and myself, grow.

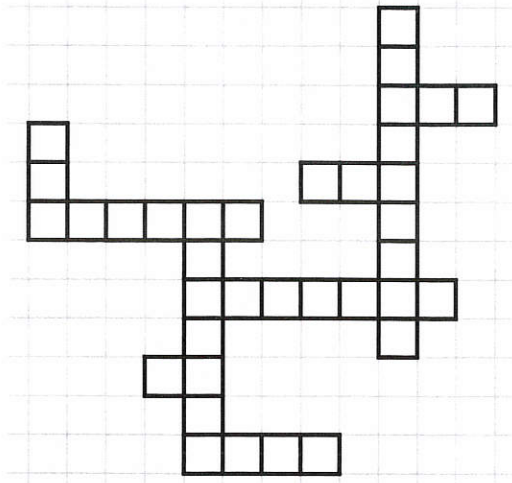
A true friend is a good influence on others, helping them to make good decisions. Remember to always be aware of your own words and actions, and hold yourself to the same standard that you hold others to.

- What are some rules you would like other people to follow? Do you need to work on some of these areas too?
- When someone is doing or saying something that is wrong, what are some ways you can talk to them?
- When someone is doing something good, what can you say to praise them?

DEFINITION PUZZLE

(Game, 15 minutes)

Using the words in the definition of tolerance, fill in the puzzle. Make sure to put only one letter in each box and use each word in the definition one time. ([Solution available online.](#))



INTERNATIONAL FOOD FESTIVAL

(Project, ongoing)



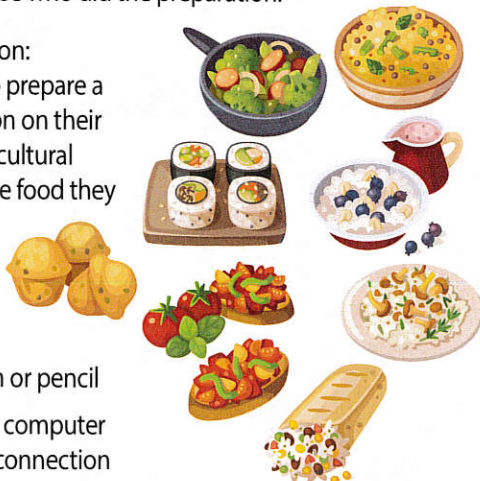
Sometimes the reason it is hard to be tolerant is because a new idea or circumstance is difficult to understand and maybe a little bit frightening. It is good to try new things and to learn about your classmates and friends so that you can better understand their background and the things that they enjoy.

Choose some countries that have unique foods and traditions. Divide students into groups and assign each group a different country. Each group can pick some foods that they would like to make. Have cookbooks available or search on the internet. Write down the recipes and have the students prepare the foods at home. Pick a special day to serve the foods and encourage students to dress up in traditional costumes from their assigned countries. Give the students the opportunity to try each food and talk with those who did the preparation.

Further exploration:
Have each group prepare a short presentation on their country and the cultural importance of the food they chose to make.

Supplies:

- Map or globe
- Paper and pen or pencil
- Cookbooks or computer with internet connection



COLORFUL CANDIES

(Experiment, 25 minutes)



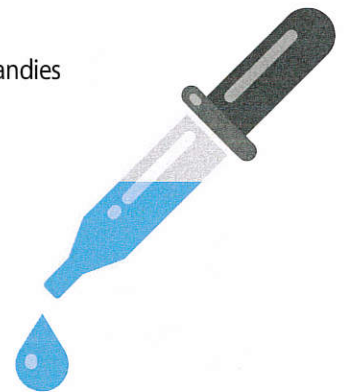
Tolerance encourages us to appreciate the unique qualities of others. If we try to force everyone to be exactly the same, the result can be a muddled mess. Our differences create a beautiful mosaic. This simple experiment in chromatography demonstrates this aspect of tolerance.

Take a sheet of newspaper and cut off the bottom blank part of the page into one long strip. Then cut the strip into two equal pieces. Take from the M&M® bag 2 red candies, 2 yellow candies, 2 green candies, 2 orange candies, 2 blue candies, and 2 brown candies.

On one plate place the yellow, light brown, and green candies into a pile. With an eyedropper put 10 drops of water onto the candies. Using the spoon, stir the candies in the water until the candy coating has been dissolved. Throw the candies away and place one end of the strip of paper into the liquid and the other end across the plate. Repeat the above procedures using the red and dark brown candies. Leave each plate alone for a couple hours and observe what happens to the liquid.

Supplies:

- 1 package plain M&M® candies
- Cup of water
- Eyedropper
- 1 sheet of newspaper
- 2 large plastic plates
- 1 plastic spoon
- Scissors



TOLERANCE POEM

(Literacy Connection, 15 minutes)

I will not confuse what's right with what is popular to do;
I will look for ways to help my friends find good things to pursue.

I will listen first before I speak, and not quickly condemn.
I'll expect the same things of myself that I expect of them.

My character is what will make a leader out of me!
So next time through, let's say it more ENTHUSIASTICALLY!

SECTION 3 Tolerance in Real Life

Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams was the wife of John Adams, the second President of the United States, and the mother of John Quincy Adams, the sixth U.S. president. During the time when Abigail Adams lived, the African slave trade was prevalent in the American colonies. People were discriminated against based on their skin color, and many American colonists were prejudiced against the slaves.

Abigail Adams thought that the slave trade was wrong and chose to do what was right instead of what other people wanted her to do. One day, Abigail began to teach a little boy named James who really wanted to learn how to read and write. After some time passed, he decided that he wanted to go to school so he could learn more. Abigail thought that was a great idea and helped him attend the local school. After a few days of James attending the school, Abigail received a visit from one of the parents of the children that went to the same school as James. Instead of the parent being kind and accepting, he wanted to make James leave school just because he was black. Abigail Adams stood her ground and defended James' right to an education. James got to continue going to school and learning like the other children.

Abigail Adams made a decision that was unpopular in her day and chose to treat James with respect. She did not let differences in race or ethnicity affect her attitudes or decisions. When other people disagreed with her, she did not allow their prejudice to influence her actions.

Learn more about
Abigail Adams's
Tolerance at
www.CharacterFirstEd.com.



THE EASTERN BOX TURTLE

(Story, 10 minutes)

The turtle lumbered through the tall grass, pushing his way across twigs and over rocks. His heavy shell slowed progress even more as he struggled to fit through small spaces. Even though the shell protected the turtle from predators, it often made it difficult to fit between rocks or under branches. As he wandered through the foliage, he found tasty blackberries to munch on. The turtle was slowly crawling from berry bush to berry bush, enjoying lunch, when suddenly, "WHAM!" The turtle felt a heavy weight hit the top of his shell. Immediately the turtle pulled his head and legs into his shell and closed the shell so tightly that it was impossible to see out.

The turtle hadn't seen what hit him, and now that his shell was closed, he couldn't see what was going on outside. He could, however, feel that something or someone was carrying him and trying to pry open his shell. It was quite annoying, and not a little bit frightening, to one minute be eating tasty blackberries and the next to be tossed into the air, bounced off rocks, and chewed on!

Little did the turtle know that a curious, small raccoon had discovered the turtle and decided to investigate the moving shell. With his strong jaws and nimble paws, the raccoon tried to pry the shell open. He examined every inch of the shell, looking for an opening to wedge a claw or tooth into. But he couldn't find a single crack in the closed shell. The raccoon even tried to hit the shell against a rock and used all four of his feet to try and pry the shell open. But nothing worked!



Inside the shell, the turtle was becoming very upset—he just wanted to be left alone. The air inside the shell was getting hot and stale and the turtle's muscles hurt from having to keep the shell so tightly clamped shut. Even though the turtle could stay inside his shell for hours, he couldn't ignore the raccoon. He couldn't relax his muscles. Any compromise of his position, even for a moment, would be all the raccoon needed to insert one of his little fingers and pry the shell open.

For a while it seemed that the raccoon and turtle had reached a stalemate. From the curious raccoon's perspective, the turtle offered a challenge and a fun-looking rock to investigate. From the turtle's perspective, the raccoon was a major irritation that was disrupting his lunch. The turtle continued to hold his shell closed with all his strength.

After a while, the sun came out. Turtles are cold-blooded creatures. Their body temperature changes with the temperature of their surroundings. When the sun came out, the shell started to absorb the heat making it even hotter inside. Though the turtle had no teeth, the sharp edge of his beak-like mouth could inflict a nasty bite. The turtle finally had enough and decided to attack whatever was outside his shell. As quickly as he could, the turtle opened his shell, stuck out his head, and opened his mouth to bite the little raccoon. But just before he did, the turtle hesitated. The turtle looked at the raccoon, and the raccoon studied the turtle. The turtle decided not to attack the curious raccoon and the little raccoon wandered off to find something else to investigate. The turtle went back to eating his tasty berries and finished his lunch in peace.

To the turtle, the nuisance that had disrupted his lunch turned out to just be a curious baby raccoon. To the raccoon, the turtle turned out to be a rubbery, smelly rock that wasn't worth eating. The turtle couldn't change the raccoon and the raccoon couldn't change the turtle.

The next time you have an irritating person in your life, try to listen to their perspective. They may just be curious but not able to express that curiosity in an appropriate manner. Or the two of you may be very different from each other and need to learn more about the other person's perspective. Until you have a better understanding of the situation, always act respectfully. Responding in anger or threatening another person only makes the situation worse.

BOX TURTLE

(Craft, 20 minutes)

This box turtle is a fun visual reminder and can be used as a prop for telling the nature story.

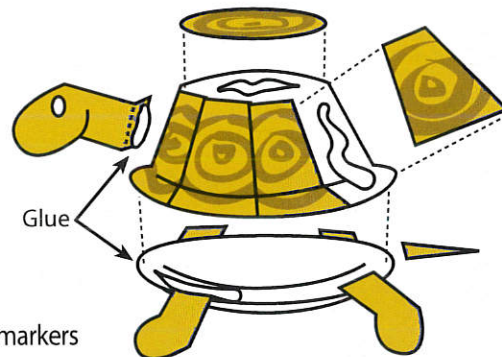
For each turtle, make a circle by tracing the bottom of a foam bowl onto a sheet of paper. Then cut out the circle. Cut out 8-10 rectangles and taper them at one end. The rectangles should be large enough to cover the sides of the bowl when all are glued on. Next, cut out feet, a tail, and a head for your turtle.

Have students color brown and yellow rings on the circle and the tapered rectangles of paper. They can also color the feet, tail, and head. Glue the circle to the bottom of the bowl and the tapered rectangles around the sides. Let dry.

Squeeze a thin line of glue around the rim of the bowl and attach it briefly to the plate. Then separate the two and insert the tail and feet between the plate and bowl with the feet on the correct sides. The glue should be tacky by this time and hold the feet securely. Fold the neck edge of the head under about $\frac{1}{4}$ " and use the flap to glue the head in place. Let dry thoroughly before using.

Supplies:

- Foam bowl
- Foam plate
- Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Crayons or markers



Family Connection

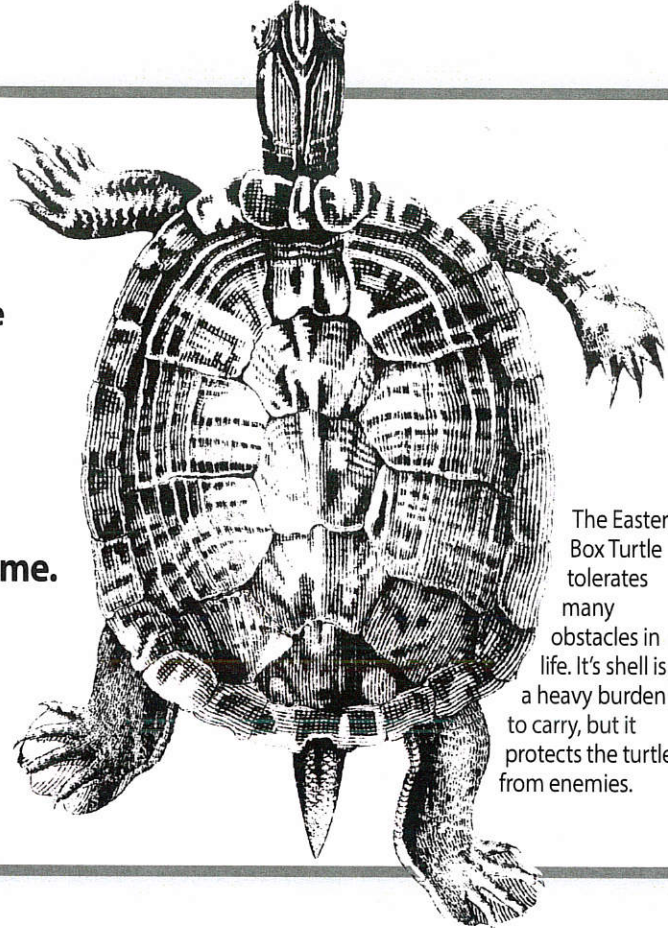
OVERVIEW: Tolerance is showing respect for others who are different than me. Tolerance does not mean changing your opinion or ideas every time you meet someone that disagrees with you. It does mean that the background, physical abilities, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, experiences, or family situation of another person should not affect how you treat them. Always treat everyone you meet with kindness and respect. You can oftentimes avoid misunderstandings and disagreements if you take the time to listen to others and try to see things from their perspective.

Tolerance

Definition: Showing respect for others who are different than me

I WILL...

- ☐ Listen to others.
- ☐ Remember that not everyone is the same.
- ☐ Look for ways to connect with others.
- ☐ Know the difference between what is "popular" and what is "right."
- ☐ Help others, and myself, grow.



The Eastern Box Turtle tolerates many obstacles in life. Its shell is a heavy burden to carry, but it protects the turtle from enemies.

CHARACTER QUIZ:

1. How does it feel when someone is respectful and kind to you even when they disagree with you or come from a different background? _____
2. Why is tolerance better than prejudice and hasty judgment? _____
3. A tolerant person... a. gets angry when someone disagrees with them. b. tries to understand and learn why other people think or act the way they do. c. changes their mind to agree whenever someone says something different than them.
4. Tolerance often requires that you listen more than you talk: TRUE? or FALSE?
5. Name two concepts that are related to tolerance: _____