

## How can we learn to celebrate our differences?

- ◆ Talk about differences among people positively with your friends.
- ◆ Remember that what's important about a person is what's inside, not outside. Look beyond the surface in understanding others.
- ◆ A person's race, gender, or physical condition should never be a reason for ridicule or rejection.
- ◆ Put yourself in another person's place and try to see life from that viewpoint.
- ◆ Point out prejudice when it happens and discuss it with your friends. Encourage them to speak up when they see someone, especially another child, being treated unfairly.
- ◆ Learn how certain cultural patterns have developed or have been influenced by such things as climate, history, language, literature, and art.
- ◆ Take pride in your country. Music and drama are a good place to begin.
- ◆ Ask your parents to take you to the museum, international festivals, restaurants, and other places that offer different customs and lifestyles.
- ◆ Try to have direct contact with other children and people whose cultures or lifestyles are different from your own.
- ◆ Read books about other countries and cultures.
- ◆ In your own family, encourage the boys and girls to share the household chores, such as laundry and dishes.
- ◆ Develop self-confidence. Insecure people are more likely to be suspicious of others. High self-esteem will help you handle insults from others.
- ◆ Ask your parents how they coped when they were treated unfairly. There are some mean people in this world, but this meanness and ignorance has nothing to do with you as a person.

# Celebrating Our Differences



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In this wonderful world in which we live, there are different peoples, cultures, beliefs and traditions. It is our responsibility to respect all of them.

How exciting it is to realize that we know people of different coloured skin or hair than ours but to learn that they laugh at the same jokes as we do and cry when they are hurt, just as we do.

Are we really so different? When we play games, do we not all want to win? When we are in school, do we not all want to get the best test results? Success has nothing to do with the colour of our skin, or the country in which we were born. Even though each person is unique, there are many similar qualities that we should strive to develop.

Look at your friends. If they are black, their skins are different shades of black and brown. If they are white, the same applies. No two people are exactly the same...except sometimes when they are twins!

Respect does not distinguish between the colour of the skin or the texture of the hair. Respect means that we acknowledge and appreciate each person we meet for their character and personality.

It is always interesting to meet people from other countries and to learn about their traditions and culture.

It is surprising to learn sometimes how similar their lifestyle is to ours, even though they may have come from a country on the other side of the world.

People tend to be a little suspicious when a stranger, particularly one who has come from another country, comes into their area. They look for signs of a different way of life or different values. Very often they realize that the newcomer's values are very similar to their own. They become friends and share their stories with each other and learn a great deal of information about their new friend and the country from which he or she came.

Another area where we sometimes fail to show respect is to people who have disabilities. We tend to stare at them and make comments, which are unkind. If we try to imagine how it would feel to have a disability, maybe we would not be so cruel as we would not want others to make hurtful comments to us.

When we have learnt to treat people with disabilities with respect, we can influence our friends to do the same.

Many people make unkind remarks about others, especially people who are "different" from them, because they do not feel very good about themselves. That is why a high self-esteem is so important. When we feel

good about ourselves, we want others to be happy too.

It would be an even better world if we could all learn to live together, without fighting, jealousy, suspicion and dislike for anyone who appears different from us. Just as we want people to see who we are rather than what we look like, so we should look for the inner person in others, rather than disliking them because they are not our colour or were not born in the same country as we were.

People now travel more freely than ever before and every country has a large number of people who were not born there, but who have come to visit or to live. When different peoples and races live in the same community we discover how similar we all really are and learn to respect each other for those traditions that are not the same as ours. There is no right or wrong as long as we all live in harmony and peace, not hurting others by words or actions, but helping whenever help is needed.

