20+ Activities Crowdsourced from First Book Members!

# **PROMOTING RESPECT & EMPATHY:**

\* \* \* \* \*

A Toolkit for Educators of All Grades



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction	1
How to Use this Toolkit	2
Whole Group Activities to Promote Respect & Empathy	3
All Grades	3
PreK & Elementary	4
Middle & High School	7
Routines & Habits to Promote Respect & Empathy	11
Member Recommended Books to Promote Respect & Empathy	13
Favorite Resources to Promote Respect & Empathy	15
Appendix	17
Peace Table Instructions	17
Hearts for All – Heart Template	18
Hearts for All – Positive Words	19
Poetry & the Danger of a Single Story – Bubble Graphic Organizer	20
Poetry & the Danger of a Single Story – Stereotyping Writing Prompt	21

© 2019 First Book. Written by Julye M. Williams. Designed by Raven & Crow Studio.

# **INTRODUCTION**

"Empathy begins with understanding life from another person's perspective. Nobody has an objective experience of reality. It's all through our own individual prisms." – Sterling K. Brown

In the absence of empathy, differences have the potential to breed conflict. Members of the First Book Network know this well, and in our daily work with children, we recognize our responsibility to teach kids the importance of being able to step into the shoes of another, and see the world through their perspective. This is true empathy. This is preparing our kids to create a more caring and compassionate world.

The First Book Network is deeply engaged in helping children from birth to age 18 develop respect and empathy. Whether in a classroom, health clinic, afterschool program, local community center, or another meeting place, First Book members know that developing these skills takes time, repetition, practice and interaction with others. We cannot truly know the meaning of respect or empathy without others. And we learn best when we work together.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

### Want to share your experience or idea?

Share your tip or strategy for promoting respect and empathy on Twitter or Instagram. Use the hashtag **#FirstBookCommunity** and **#FirstBookEmpathyProject** to share your story.

We'll collect the posts and routinely share out additional ideas via the First Book blog and emails to the First Book community!



In this toolkit, *Promoting Respect & Empathy: A Toolkit for Educators of All Grades*, is a collection of activities, tips, book recommendations, and more gathered from First Book members across the U.S., who, like you, support kids in under-resourced communities and programs. All of the content comes from educators in urban cities, rural communities, suburban towns and Native American reservations. These activities show the creativity of First Book members, as well as how fun, imaginative and meaningful interactions can help students learn and practice building respect and empathy.

Lastly, this project is the third installment in a series of resources sponsored by the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and First Book to address bias, cultural competence and empathy. In a recent survey of educators, we found these areas to be of critical importance across the country. It is our hope that in sharing the great work already being done across the First Book member community, you will find even more ways and ideas to promote respect and empathy.

# **HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT**

Whether you have just a few minutes a week, or the flexibility to plan for more, this toolkit is designed to help you maximize the time you have with students and give you clear, actionable steps to lead an impactful activity in your program or classroom. The source? Your fellow members of the First Book Network, who, like you, support children in under-resourced communities across the country, and who've implemented these activities with consistent success.

### This toolkit has five sections:

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

Whole Group Activities – Divided into elementary, middle and high school, these activities provide a full outline of the materials needed, and step-by step actions you can take to replicate the activity with your students in group settings.

**Routines & Habits** – Since promoting respect and empathy can happen all year long, this section offers suggestions for daily, weekly or monthly habits you can begin with your students to create an ongoing culture that celebrates respect and empathy.

### RESPECT

To show consideration for the feelings, wishes, rights or traditions of others.

### **EMPATHY**

The ability to step into the shoes of another and see the world through their perspective.

**Member Recommended Books to Promote Respect & Empathy** – First Book members share their favorite books and recommendations on how to use them to promote respect and empathy with students. This section also shares more about First Book's resources that can serve as a launch pad for discussion and reflection.

Additional Resources – To go beyond books, First Book members recommend a number of websites to boost your knowledge, and give you greater insight when promoting respect and empathy. They can be found here.

**Appendix** – There is no need to recreate the wheel as a member of the First Book Network. This section includes the handouts that you can use to implement the whole group activities.

### For quick reference, check out the icons!

**Grade** – Look for the grade band to let you know the suggested age and grade for each activity. However, don't let this stop you from reading each activity – we believe you may get inspiration from many activities to support your work.

**Time** – Look for the clock icon to let you know how much class or program time an activity should take. Note, this does not include time needed to prepare for the activity! Activities that require more than one class or group meeting are preceded by the number of class meetings, and then the time (for example 2 x 15 minutes).

There are many ways to build respect and empathy – from using stories, film, daily routines and more. We received hundreds of submissions, and what follows are only a few of all that we reviewed. Our goal is to share activities that could be implemented in a variety of locations, that are flexible enough for you to modify to fit the time you have available.

We hope you and your students enjoy these activities and that you find creative and inspiring ways to promote respect and empathy.

# WHOLE GROUP ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE RESPECT & EMPATHY

# **PEACE TABLE**



"We have a Peace Table in our community. If any student has a disagreement or feels bad because of another student's behavior, they may request a meeting at the 'Peace Table', where they discuss how the behaviors made them feel. This is an introductory way to help students get to a place where they can resolve conflicts and disagreements organically. The students will discuss the problem until an agreement has been made and the parties involved feel satisfied with the outcome. Having a Peace Table created an environment in which students can safely talk to one another and express their feelings without fear of repercussions." – Louise Reid, Gifted & Talented Coordinator, Immokalee, FL

MATERIALS NEEDED -

- Print-out of suggested instructions for resolving conflict or disagreements at the Peace Table (see Appendix page 17)
- An (optional) item to serve as an invitation to the Peace Table (e.g., a special stone, flower or other age-appropriate item)

### WHAT TO DO

- Introduce the concept of a "Peace Table" to your students. Explain that it will be a way to help students solve problems and conflicts on their own, or with minimal input from adults, while helping them develop respect and empathy for each other.
- Designate a space in your class or program where students can meet and have a conversation. If possible, decorate the space so that it is warm and inviting (e.g., a tablecloth, a plant, peaceful words, etc.).
- Using the instructions, role play for students how to have a conversation at the Peace Table. Select two students to solve a "made up" conflict in front of your full group (for example, stepping on a shoe, a misunderstanding, etc.). Guide them

### **ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY**

To scale this down for younger students who are still developing language skills, shorten the exercise to no more than 5 minutes. You can model the language children should use to share with each other with a prompt such as, "I feel...". You can also model active listening by holding one finger over your lips while one child is talking, and ask that the listening child do the same.

through the instructions that may be printed and taped to the Peace Table. This will give all students a model of how to solve conflict, how to actively listen, and have a peaceful interaction.

• Decide how you want students to request a meeting at the Peace Table, and tell them how to request a meeting. With my students, if someone wants to meet with another student at the Peace Table, they will give them the invitation (e.g., a flower) and the other student will go sit with them at the table.

# WARM AND FUZZY



**MATERIALS NEEDED** 

"This is an activity that can be done year-round where teachers catch students 'doing good' – showing respect, sharing, being kind to others, etc. This helps students feel validated and secure in the learning environment." - Maria Snider, Child Care Director, St. Paul, MN

#### Jar

Fuzzy mini pom poms – enough for every student in your class to receive at least 3.

### WHAT TO DO

Introduce the "Warm and Fuzzy" activity to students. Tell them that the class is going to practice showing respect, sharing and being kind to others. This time, however, when you catch them "doing good" they will receive a colorful pom pom that can be added to the class or program "warm fuzzy" jar. When the "warm fuzzy" jar is full of pom poms, the group will have a celebration.

Next, roleplay with children and help them understand how to show kindness and respect to others. Example scenarios to roleplay include:

- When someone is sad Have a student pretend to be sad. You can model what to say and do. For example, saying, "When a friend is sad, we want them to know we care. (Student name), are you ok?"
- When someone is hurt Have a student pretend to be hurt (e.g., after falling, bumping their knee, etc.). You can model

### ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY

Use books to model kind and respectful behavior. After reading a story, ask students about the characters and their ability, or inability to show respect and empathy. For example:

- Who should have received a pom • pom in this story? Why?
- What did they do to deserve or earn a pom pom?
- What could another character have done to earn a pom pom?

+++++++ PreK-ELEMENTARY

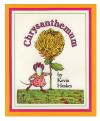
what to say and do. For example, "When a friend is hurt, we ask how we can help. (Student name), do you need any help?"

When someone does something kind - In this roleplay, drop something on the floor that a student can easily pick up (e.g., a pen, pencil, etc.) and have them hand it back to you. Roleplay how to show gratitude: "Thank you, (student name), for picking that up for me. That was very kind of you."

Tell students that caring for our classroom/program friends is a way to show kindness. Initially, it is helpful to model kindness and respect side-by-side with students, and help them recognize opportunities to show kindness and respect (e.g., when someone is sad, when someone does something nice, etc.). You know it's working if children start to point out respectful and empathetic behaviors of other students.

# **OUR WORDS MATTER**





"At the beginning of the year and mid-way through the year, I always use this lesson. By reading **Chrysanthemum** by Kevin Henkes, my students are able to understand that it's OK to be different (or have a different name). In the end, students are better able to see that even though you can say 'I'm sorry' for being mean, the words have still hurt the other person, so it's better just to be kind."

– Becca, Media Specialist, Gaithersburg, MD

### • MATERIALS NEEDED •

- Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes, or similar book
- A picture or drawing of Chrysanthemum (search Google Images or create your own)

### WHAT TO DO

### Activity 1

Read the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (or alternate suggestion) aloud to your students. Ask them, "How did the students in the class treat Chrysanthemum? What did her parents and music teacher do that made her feel better? How can our words affect others?" Focus your discussion on how to show care, concern and encouragement like Chrysanthemum's parents and music teacher did in the story.

#### Activity 2

- Show students the picture of Chrysanthemum. Take turns saying mean and hurtful words to the print out or drawing of her (usually about her name and how it's so different) while also slightly crumbling her picture. Explain to students that hurtful words can stay with someone and they don't forget.
- Then, show care, concern and empathy to Chrysanthemum by saying kind things to her (such as "Let's play a game of Parcheesi!", "Your name is absolutely perfect.", etc.). Each time we show care and concern we attempt to smooth out the picture of Chrysanthemum.
- At the end of the activity, ask students "Does she look exactly the same as she started?" Many of the kids answer "No, she's wrinkley." We then go on to discuss how while she did look better each time someone was kind to her, she did not look the same as when we first started – before the teasing and saying mean things to her. In the end, students are better able to see that even though you can say "I'm sorry" for being mean, the words have still hurt the other person, so it's better just to be kind.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

### **ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY**

To enhance this activity for older students, ask them to pre-create a list of mean phrases that they have heard spoken to them, or a friend – whether out loud or online (e.g. cyberbullying). Instead of using a picture or drawing of Chrysanthemum, ask students for a popular YouTuber, actor or actress and create or obtain a picture of this person. Then, have students say those mean phrases, and then kind words, to the picture. End by asking students, "Does she look exactly the same as she started?" and discuss the harm words can do.



### ALTERNATE BOOKS

Look for stories that feature a character who gets teased, yet also has a source of encouragement in their life. An example is *My Friend Maggie* by Hannah E. Harrison. Visit the Bullying section on the First Book Marketplace for more titles to use for this activity. <u>FirstBookMarketplace.org/bullying</u>

+++++ PreK-ELEMENTARY

# **HEARTS FOR ALL**



"This activity was simple but powerful. Little words can have a BIG impact. My 6th grade students were beaming! Sixth graders care a lot what others think about them and it was wonderful to have each of them bombarded with positive affirmations from their classmates with this activity. Choosing a positive word for someone you are not close with encourages both thoughtfulness and respect." – First Book member in California

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Heart cut-outs for each student in your group (or another shape) with their name written on it (see Appendix page 18 for a sample)
- · Background music about friendship, for example:
  - "You've Got a Friend In Me"
  - "Thank You For Being A Friend" This was their favorite!
  - "That's What Friends Are For"
  - "Lean On Me"
  - "I'll Be There For You"

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

### WHAT TO DO

#### Activity 1

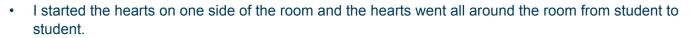
- Have your class or group brainstorm a list of positive descriptive words or traits: for example; *cheerful, helpful, kind, hard working, humorous, thoughtful, etc.* (See the Appendix page 18 for a sample)
- Type all the words (I usually add several) into a document. Our document had approximately 75 words.

#### Activity 2

- Play the friendship music and give students time to review the words in the document – either by printing a copy of the document and distributing it to each student, using a document camera, or other method.
- Show students the hearts with the pre-written names. Tell them that, with the music playing, they will silently write one word from the document on each heart that describes the person named, and pass the heart to the next person.

### **ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY**

Enhance this activity by reading, or having students read a story about kindness and compassion. During and/or after finishing a story, asking questions such as, **"What positive traits did the character(s) have? Who struggled to show respect and empathy, and why?"** can help students see respect and empathy in action. For great book recommendations, visit First Book's Friendship section where you'll find stories about making friends, challenges among friends and more. FirstBookMarketplace.org/friends



• When I received all the hearts back on my desk, I passed them out to the students and they were able to read what their classmates wrote.

# **TAP INTO THE NEWS**



"We use NewsELA to expose students to various cultures and perspectives. Recently we read an article about an education professor with dyslexia. It was assigned the week we read a short story about a student with a disability. Students were surprised that people with learning disabilities could actually become teachers." – Karole, English Language Arts teacher, Sylvester, GA

- MATERIALS NEEDED -

- An account with NewsELA (if you don't already have an account, visit <u>www.newsela.com</u> and click "JOIN" on the homepage. Then, follow the prompts to set up a free account.)
- Reflection questions listed below

### WHAT TO DO

- Select an article for students to review. The various sections of NewsELA offer a range of topics that can be searched by keyword, date or section. The sections I find most thought provoking are "Issue Spotlight" and "Opinion." The "Opinion" section contains, but is not limited to, pro/con articles that include viewpoints from two authors. Click on the "Library" tab to select a category of interest.
- Provide students the article you select.
- As an in-class or homework assignment (I tend to give students the article on Friday, and ask for their responses to the questions below the following Friday), ask students to read the article and respond to reflection rather than comprehension questions. The following questions can be adapted for any article:
  - What can you learn from ----'s story?
  - How does this change the way you think about (topic)?
  - What could you say/do to encourage someone in ----'s position?
  - If you were ----, would you ----?

Below are examples of articles and questions l've used with my students to spark conversation about respect and empathy:

"My Disabilities Do Not Define Me"

- How would you react to learning one of your teachers had a learning disability?
- Do you think his learning disability positively or negatively affects his teaching ability?

If you were Jim, would you tell your students about your dyslexia?

#### "Katelyn Ohashi"

How could Katelyn's story help young athletes?

If you were Katelyn, would you still continue to do gymnastics? (or quit it altogether?)

### "Mandatory Vaccines"

How would you feel if a classmate was not vaccinated?

If you were not vaccinated, would you be afraid to tell your classmates?

Students are then invited to discuss the article and their reflections during class time. Asking prompts such as, "Who showed empathy and who did not?" "How could this situation have been different if key people showed empathy?" "How can this situation be resolved now?" are helpful when discussing respect and empathy.

### +++++ MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



"This activity boosted empathy in my classroom by encouraging students to reflect on how people are treated, and what they could do in the moment to come to another's aid. It also led to conversations about social injustices, prejudices, and standing up for what's right. It, of course, led to further episodes as well." – Kristina, Academic Coach, Akron, OH

- MATERIALS NEEDED -

- Select a 5-10 minute segment from an episode of ABC's TV show, <u>What Would You Do?</u> (<u>http://bit.ly/WhatWouldYouDoShows</u>)
- Paper for students to write reflections

### WHAT TO DO

- Pre-select a 5-10 minute segment from an episode of ABC's What Would You Do? to show your students. I would often pick specific episodes based on their relatability to the students, or how well they connected to issues I'd been seeing at school. For example, our school has a homeless shelter as a neighbor. I heard students often referencing how all the homeless people use the money they get for drugs or alcohol. They would also sometimes mock other students by saying things about where they live, sleep, eat, get their clothes, etc. One of the What Would You Do? episodes dealt with a homeless man trying to buy lunch at a restaurant and the waiter refusing to serve him. I decided to have my students watch a segment of this episode.
- Once you select your segment, have students watch the video. I usually give this 5-10 minutes.

### **ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY**

To create an ongoing dialogue about the importance of empathy give students the opportunity to read books that specifically highlight this skill. First Book's Respect & Empathy section includes many titles for all grade levels that show great and poor examples of what it means to be empathetic.Visit <u>FirstBookMarketplace.org/respectand-empathy</u> to learn more.

++++++ MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL



· What are your thoughts & reactions to the video?

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

- What would you do if you found yourself in that situation as an onlooker?
- · How would you feel if you, a family member or a friend were treated in the same manner?
- Share your final thoughts, suggestions for onlookers or people in that situation, relatable personal stories, etc.
- Then, for the last 10 minutes, we discussed the answers to the four questions as a class. What would students do? Why?
- We also discussed the meaning and importance of empathy. Why is it important to be able to put yourself in someone else's shoes? How did some onlookers show empathy, and how did others not show it?

# **POETRY & THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY**



"The main thing this lesson did was promote education of ALL stereotypes. It also gave a voice to my often stereotyped students. The best submissions I received were from my students with IEPs. I've cried at many of the poems my students have written as they debunk their stereotypes. I generally choose a few to read aloud, unnamed, to celebrate their writing. It's powerful for us all!" – First Book member in Missouri

### MATERIALS NEEDED -

- TED Talk, "<u>The Danger of a Single Story</u>" by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (<u>http://bit.ly/DangerOfASingleStory</u>)
- The transcript of her TED Talk (<u>http://bit.ly/DOSSTranscript</u>)
- Graphic organizer (Appendix page 20)
- Stereotyping writing prompt (Appendix page 21)

### WHAT TO DO

Activity 1 – Students Watch & Discuss TED Talk

- Begin the lesson by telling students that we are going to discuss stories.
- Then, show the TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story." The first time we watch the video, students only listen and view, with the goal of understanding Adichie's message.
- Then, I distribute the printed transcript and we go back and annotate it together by writing any questions or comments we have about Adichie's words in the margins. We discuss her purpose and credibility by answering the following questions:
  - Why do you believe that Adichie felt compelled to write (speak) this piece?
  - What evidence does she give to prove why she is giving this speech?

### **ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY**

Enhance this activity by encouraging students to learn about the diversity and differences within a single culture, race, ethnic or religious group with books from First Book's Diversity & Inclusion section. Here you'll find great titles that reflect different experiences within the same group – further evidence that there is danger in a single story for any group of people. <u>FirstBookMarketplace.org/</u> <u>stories-for-all-project</u>

+++++ MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

- How does the use of her own bias, or pre-judgement of others, as evidence help or hurt her credibility?
- Do you believe she's credible or not? Why?

\*\*\*\*\*\*

Next, we discuss stereotypes. I ask students to share with me what they think the definition of a stereotype is. We come up with a definition we're all happy with and discuss why they've come to see a stereotype as the certain definition we've crafted (personal experience, books, movies, friends, etc.). Then I ask them to share stereotypes with me that they are most familiar with (usually blondes are dumb, Asians are smart, etc.). Sometimes, it can get a little touchy, but I encourage these tough discussions so we can see why these stereotypes are harmful. With a respectful environment, it's powerful. I then ask what's wrong with these stereotypes in their opinion? What's wrong with them in Adichie's opinion?

- If I have a particularly hesitant or quiet group, I post one of the following quotes from her speech and ask students to share or write their thoughts about it:
  - "The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar."
  - "The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."
  - "Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."
- I focus on stereotypes often made in our school or community to make a clear connection for students. This is a good discussion for us all because many of my students are truly uneducated about terms they are using. They don't know that certain words or phrases that refer to others are offensive and hurtful. We relate these stereotypes to the TED Talk and discuss how they're dangerous. All of these discussions are student-led.

### Activity 2 – Students Explore Ways they Could be Stereotyped

- Next, students write their name in a bubble graphic organizer (see Appendix page 20 for a sample). Students write all the terms they can think of to describe themselves – stereotyped or not. (Mine generally includes teacher, mom, glasses-wearer, book nerd, etc.).
- Then, students choose one or two terms they feel they could be stereotyped by. We do some more brainstorming, and then use the Stereotyping Narrative/Poem assignment for the project.

### Activity 3 – Students Write their Personal Poem

• Use the Stereotyping writing prompt in the Appendix (page 21) to guide students in writing their own poem or essay.

# **ROUTINES & HABITS TO PROMOTE RESPECT AND EMPATHY**

Learning and practicing respect and empathy takes time, and habits form with repetition, experience and interaction with others. Check out the daily, weekly or monthly routines and habits First Book members use to build an atmosphere of caring, kindness, respect and empathy.

"I CHOOSE A BOOK EACH MONTH TO DISCUSS WITH A FOCUS ON EMPATHY. After reading a book, I'll ask students to identify actions, words and behaviors of characters that show or don't show empathy. I also ask students what they would and could to in a similar situation do model empathy. When I see students showing respect and empathy to others, I reward and celebrate them."

- First Book member in Fairfield, CA

All grades

"I IMPLEMENT ACCOUNTABLE CONVERSATION INTO MY CLASSROOM. It is a powerful tool to build respect and empathy. Asking questions such as those below give students time to slow down and consider the perspectives and opinions of their classmates."

All grades

All grades

- Can you repeat what \_\_\_\_\_ shared?
- Do you agree or disagree?
- What I heard you say is...
- I don't understand. Can you tell me in different way?
- What would you do if....
- How might you feel if....
- Maria Snider, Child Care Director, St. Paul, MN

"I USE MY MORNING GREETINGS TO PROMOTE EMPATHY. As students arrive, they get to choose how they want to be greeted – either with a handshake, side hug or fist bump. Then, when school starts we have a 'Morning Meeting.' This is where students share good news from home or community (e.g., a relative coming to visit, winning a sports game, finishing a good book, or other good news). We also acknowledge and wish the students well who are absent. This helps develop empathy by encouraging students to connect with each other – beyond the surface so that we can share and celebrate good things in their lives. Next year, I'll create a wheel so that students can spin it to show their preferred greeting."

– First Book member in Pomona, CA

**"OUR CLASS HAS A 'WISH YOU WELL' HELPER EACH DAY.** This practice was inspired by Conscious Discipline. Essentially, when a student is absent, our 'Wish You Well' helper calls that student to check in on them, and to let them know that our class wishes them well." – *Randa, Preschool Library Media Specialist, Henderson, KY* 



Grades

K-8th

### **BUILD EMPATHY BETWEEN SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS & GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.**

Grades K-5th

Grades

5th-12th

"I'm a special education teacher and I help our general education students learn how to respectfully support their peers with physical disabilities. When I visit classes, I'll read a book about a student with the same or similar disability as a student in our school. We talk about ways that students can support their peers with different physical abilities – whether by helping them without doing things for them, or giving them space when they are making unexpected choices rather than engaging them inappropriately." – Hannah, Special Ed teacher, Portland, OR

**SET UP READING BUDDIES.** "In my school, we have reading buddies where middle school students volunteer to read to K-2 students two days a week in the library before school. This is a great way to regularly encourage empathy. The older students develop positive relationships with their little buddies and consistently show kindness and compassion as they help them learn to read."

– First Book member in Bulls Gap, TN

"I INVITE STUDENTS TO CHOOSE AND SHARE A POEM WITH THE CLASS. To kick off our poetry unit, I ask students to choose a poem (any poem), print it, and bring it to class. They have to read their poem in front of the group, and explain how they connect with/relate to the poem. Kids are asked to keep whatever someone shares in class within our class – they are NOT to go out and start gossiping with their peers about what someone shared during our class time. Over the years, I've heard students read poems that remind them of their parents' divorces, abusive situations, parents who have been deported and parents who have died or who have terminal illnesses. I've even had kids come out as gay and transgender during poetry day. The end result is consistent – students form bonds, they get up and get tissues for other students, friendships form and beef gets squashed. I've witnessed teenagers experience a deep sense of understanding for their peers for the first time. They realize that every single person has a story."

– April McNary, teacher, Phoenix, AZ

# MEMBER RECOMMENDED BOOKS TO PROMOTE RESPECT & EMPATHY

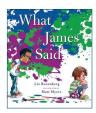


"Our school is in a rural town with little exposure to other nationalities. We read *A Piece of Home* by Jeri Watts in the library and learned about the differences between the Korean language

and English by learning a few words in Korean (e.g., hello and goodbye). The students are just learning the alphabet so the idea of reading without the A-Z alphabet is mind expanding! We also share times when we were the new student/ child in a new situation without any friends, and what we could do to make it easier for others in this situation."

- First Book member in Bedford, VA



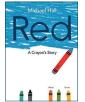


"I like to do a brief lesson on friendship and communication using a book that I purchased from the First Book Marketplace, *What James Said* by Liz Rosenberg. The book tells about a comment

that is twisted when being shared from one person to the next, and the main character gets angry instead of communicating with her friend when she thinks he's been saying bad things about her. We read the book and talk about the misunderstanding. After, we play the telephone game first in small groups and then as one large group to demonstrate how words can be twisted as they are passed on and that good communication sometimes requires being brave, having empathy and asking what was actually said."

- Corrin Rockwell, school counselor, Canton, PA





"Our school watched a video based on the book *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall and then discussed the ways in which we may be different (races, religions, beliefs, likes/dislikes,

hobbies, academic abilities, athletic abilities, etc.), but also ways we are the same. Then every student is given a crayon template to color and decorate to best represent them. We hung a huge crayon box in the hallway, with all student crayons representing each of us. This activity helped students appreciate the ways we are different, and how we are the same." – *First Book member in Birch Run, MI* 

Grades

1st-4th

### Grades 5th-8th



"*Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boltz is a great story to discuss wants vs. needs. Middle school students care a lot about fashion and shoes. We wear uniforms

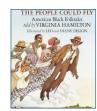
at our school to cut down on bullying. However, even though 90% of our students receive free lunch, name brand shoes are a big deal here, and many students can't afford them. The book is great to help students identify wants vs. needs, show a great example of empathy, and to appreciate the things they do have."

– Deana, school librarian, Bolivar, TN

"*Fish Cheeks* is a short story by Amy Tan that I have often used to give my students exposure to a different, but similar cultural experience." https://bit.ly/FishCheeks

- First Book member, Santa Maria, CA

### Grades 5th-8th



"The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales by Virginia Hamilton offers stunningly beautiful imagery. Picture books are a great way to introduce the abstract

concept of theme to middle school students. They are short and the images can create serious emotions for students. When doing our unit on Frederick Douglass, this book allows students to put themselves in the shoes of slaves and evokes powerful feelings. Students gain a deeper understanding of the hardships that slaves faced and learned to empathize with them."

– First Book member in St. Louis, MO

Grades



"I love to start the year with my 6th graders reading R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* because it instills in kids the importance of seeing someone beyond face value, and that you can work together to make an

important difference. Asking questions such as "Who showed empathy? How?" and "Who did not?" opens the door to powerful conversations about the impact the differences we all have has on others."

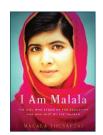
– Melissa Molitor, 6th grade English Language Arts teacher, military base in MD





"I serve students on an Indian reservation and try to use culturally relevant materials whenever possible. I like using *Three Feathers* by Richard Van Camp. The book is set on a reserve in northern Canada

and the main characters are young adults that find themselves in trouble with the law. The author/illustrator (it is a graphic novel) offer an alternative to the mainstream response to youth breaking the law and use the culture to help the youth make significant changes in their lives. We watch a few author videos on YouTube to get some background information, discuss how to read a graphic novel (some have never read a book in this format) and then independently read. Discussion that follows always comes back to respect – of self, of others and for the land. It is a powerful book for our students. Following this activity, one grade level uses it as a springboard for argumentative writing." - First Book member in Belcourt, ND



"My high school students read *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*. To help them have a better frame of reference for the book, we also watched the Academy Award-

nominated animated film, *The Breadwinner.* This book and film gave my students a better understanding of life for Muslim people under the Taliban rule. They could see that not all people from that area of the world are as our news so often portrays them – as terrorists. This book and film helped my students learn the importance of trying to understand a person's situation before making a judgement about who they are or were, an essential component of empathy."

– First Book member in South Glens Falls, NY





# **VISIT THE FIRST BOOK MARKETPLACE TO FIND** THESE BOOKS AND MANY, MANY MORE

### **DISCOVER BOOKS THAT PROMOTE RESPECT & EMPATHY** -



FirstBookMarketplace.org/ respect-and-empathy

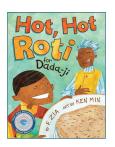
### **DISCOVER BOOKS THAT ENCOURAGE KINDNESS & COMPASSION -**



FirstBookMarketplace.org/ kindness-and-compassion

### **DISCOVER BOOKS THAT CELEBRATE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION** -





**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

FirstBookMarketplace.org/ stories-for-all-project

### **DISCOVER BOOKS THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY FEELINGS & -RELATIONSHIPS**



This section features books paired with discussion guides to support you and your students!

> FirstBookMarketplace.org/ healthy-feelings-relationships

# FAVORITE RESOURCES TO PROMOTE RESPECT & EMPATHY

Want more resources to promote respect and empathy? First Book members use the following websites to increase their knowledge and obtain tools, tips and more to support kids as they develop respect and empathy.

- First Book Healthy Feelings & Relationships Section with discussion guides for over 30 books. <u>FirstBookMarketplace.org/healthy-feelings-</u> <u>relationships</u>
- Second Step Lessons
  <u>www.secondstep.org</u>
- Sanford Harmony
  <u>www.sanfordharmony.org</u>
- Conscious Discipline
  <u>www.consciousdiscipline.com</u>
- NewsELA <u>www.newsela.com</u>
- Courageous Conversations
  <u>www.courageousconversation.com/about</u>

First Book and the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) are focused on addressing bias, cultural competence and empathy to support educators in their work with students. This is the third resource in a series of free downloadable tools to help you and your students. Find the first two below!



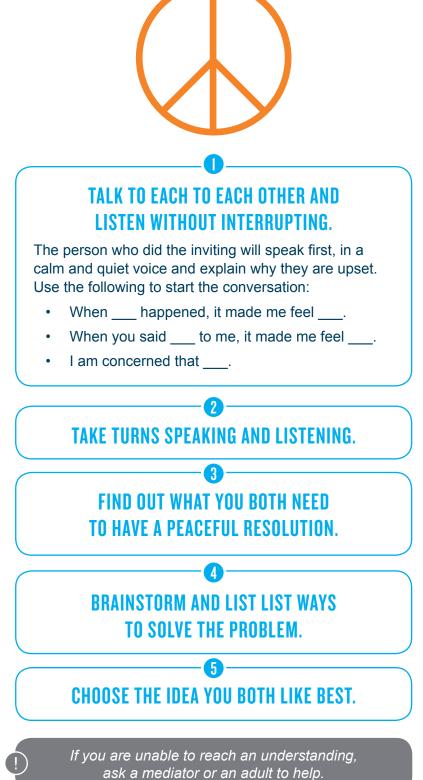
In summary, developing respect and empathy is a process. It can be exciting, memorable and most of all, life changing. Seeing the world through the eyes of others, and having consideration for their rights, feelings and traditions helps us coexist. It is our hope that the activities in this toolkit – all from the First Book Network – have given you actionable steps and "lightbulb" moments to further support your work with students.

The First Book Network is here to support your incredible work, and we look forward to sharing more voices on this important topic. We invite you to follow us on our blog, Twitter and Instagram for additional tips, activities and resources you can use to promote respect and empathy.

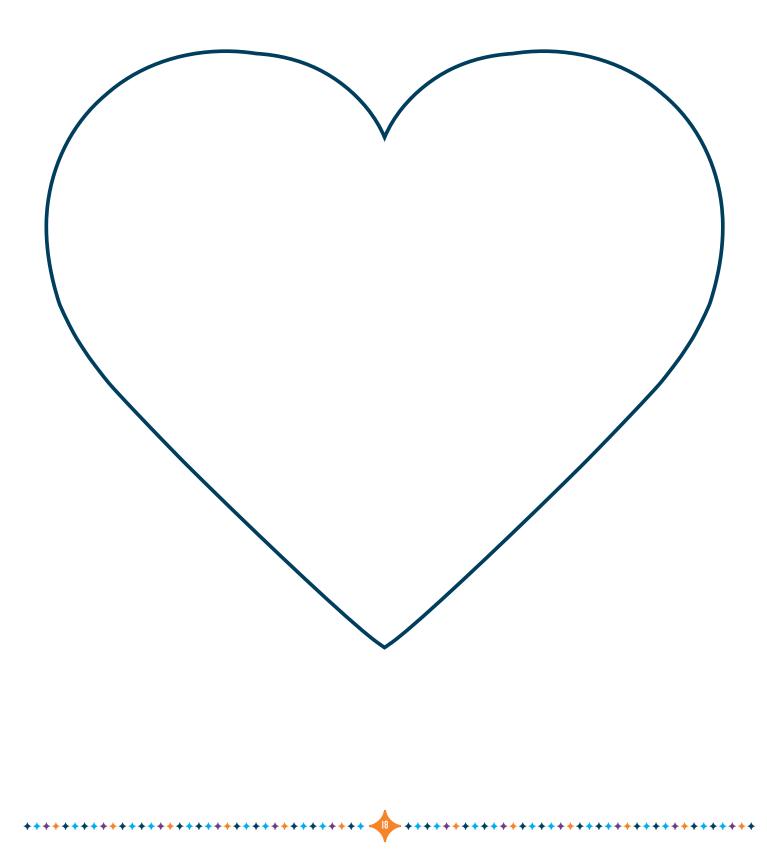
# **APPENDIX**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 





**++++++++++** 



### **HEARTS FOR ALL – POSITIVE WORDS**

### A

active admirable adorable adventurous agreeable amazing angelic athletic attractive awesome

### B

beautiful brave brilliant bubbly

### C

calm champion charming cheery classic courageous creative cute

### D

dazzling delightful divine

\*\*\*\*

# E

electrifying elegant enchanting encouraging energetic enthusiastic excellent exciling

### F

fabulous fair fantastic fine friendly fun fun loving funny

### G

generous genius genuine giving gorgeous graceful great

Н

hard-working handsome happy helpful healthy honest honorable

### 

imaginative impressive independent intellectual intelligent

### **J** joyful

K kind knowledgeable

### L

legendary lively lovely lucky

### M

marvelous masterful motivating

### N

0

natural nice

one-hundred percent open optimistic

### Р

perfect phenomenal positive pretty proud

### Q

quick quiet

### R

remarkable radiant

### S

sweet sparkling special stupendous sunny super supportive

# T

talented terrific trusting truthful

# U

upbeat

### V

vibrant victorious

### W

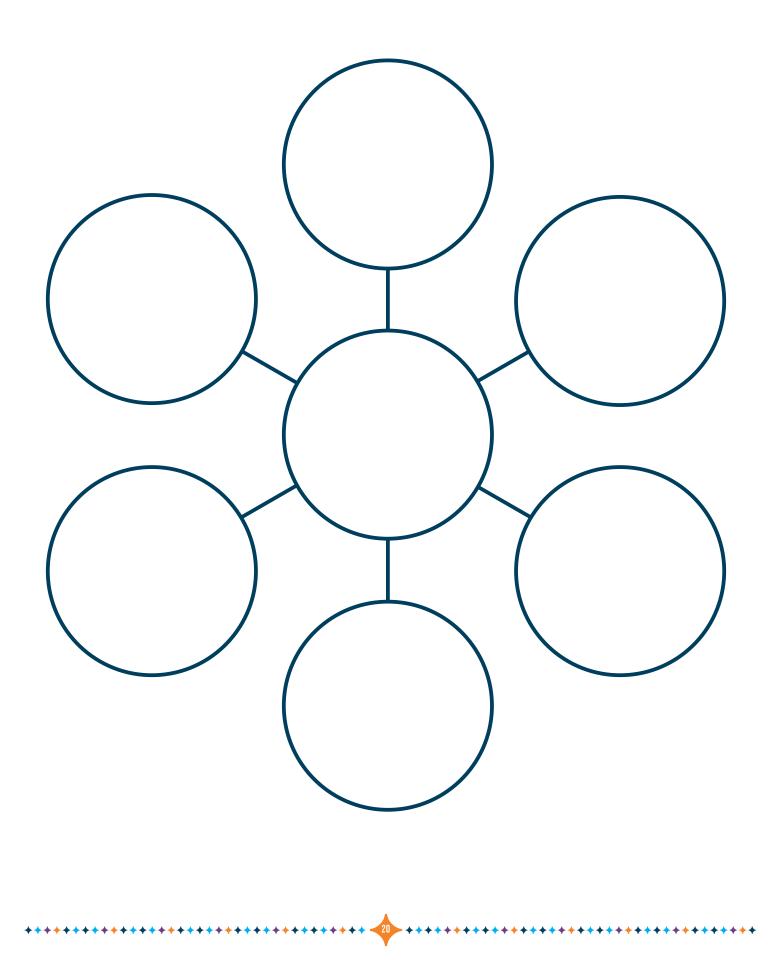
wonderful wondrous worthy wow

# Y

Z

+++++++++++

### POETRY & THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY – BUBBLE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



### **POETRY & THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY – STEREOTYPING WRITING PROMPT**

After brainstorming how your identity is represented inaccurately, and after considering Adichie's warning about the danger of a single story, this prompt asks you to think about an aspect of your identity that is often misrepresented in an inaccurate or undignified way in pop culture or the media. Write a short essay (minimum 500 words) or a short poem (3-4 stanzas) that explains why the specific media/societal image represents an aspect of your identity in an inaccurate way and educate your readers about the reality of your experience.

### Instructions:

- Select an ad, TV show, character, movie or other popular image that you feel doesn't reflect an aspect or aspects of your identity in a dignified way and explain why.
- Address your essay to a specific audience: either the creators of that image OR your classmates.

#### Goals:

Educate readers about how limited media representations can create and support stereotypes that can dehumanize or make it more difficult to see the inherent dignity and humanity of individuals.

Some things to consider as you brainstorm and write:

- What do you wish that people really knew about your identity?
- · What are some of the misconceptions that people have?
- Why is important for readers to get a different perspective on this issue?
- Why do you feel that this representation is undignified? Why does this matter to you?

#### Tasks:

- (1) Write a clear thesis,
- (2) use detailed examples to make a point,
- (3) write to inform, and
- (4) reflect on personal experience.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 





1319 F Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004 (866) READ-NOW | firstbook.org