

BEYOND TOLERANCE:

Teaching, Celebrating and Defending Diversity – Beginning with Ourselves and Our Children

Racial profiling, engrained discrimination, systemic privilege and abuse, horrific acts of hatred and violence are all a part of our lives and personal interaction, consciously and unconsciously. How do we move beyond “tolerance” to each one celebrating they/them/their race and gender, culture, status, varying abilities, and defending the identity of others?



INTRO: Who am I? Who are you? My story. Your Story...

DEFINITIONS: What is your understanding of... give an example or share an experience

- **Anti-bias**

Anti-bias is an approach that respects and embraces differences and acts against bias and unfairness. Anti-bias approaches requires critical thinking and problem solving by both children and adults. The overarching goal is creating a climate of positive self and group identity development, through which every child will achieve her or his fullest potential.

- **Racism**

Merriam-Webster's online/web definition: Racism is the belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human racial groups determine cultural or individual achievement. Belief that one's own race is superior and has the right to dominate others or that a particular racial group is inferior to the others. Hatred or intolerance of another race or someone different than one's self. The M-W expanded definition 06.2020 includes, "divided to express, first, explicit institutional bias against people because of their race, and, second, a broader implicit bias that can also result in an asymmetrical power structure."

- **Anti-racism**

A policy and practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance. In general, anti-racism is intended to promote an egalitarian society in which people do not face discrimination on the basis of their race or different-ness.

- **Disability***

A physical, emotional, or mental condition that limits or impairs a person's movements, senses, activities and interactions. A dis-advantage or handicap. *Does not = inability!

- **Diversity**

1. The state or fact of being diverse; difference; unlikeness. 2.variety; multi-formity. 3. color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc. 4. a point of difference.

- **Ethnicity**

A social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, customs, religion, traditions and language. It is about learning where one comes from, and celebrating that aspect of one's heritage.

- **Ethnocentric**

Characterized by or based on the attitude that one's own ethnic group is superior.

- **LGBTQIA**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual/aromatic, ally.

- **Multi-cultural**

The preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society, as a state or nation. The definition of multicultural is something that incorporates ideas, beliefs or people from many different countries and cultural backgrounds.

- **Race**

Race is one's biologically engineered features. It can include skin color, skin tone, eye and hair color, as well as a tendency toward developing certain diseases. It is not something that can be changed or disguised. It is a biologically classification, with more genetic variation within groups than between them. **Racist:** *the poor treatment of or violence against people because of their race or the belief that some races of people are better than others.*

Note: *One can claim one's race, while also claiming multiple ethnic affiliations. For example, someone born in Korea to Korean parents, but adopted as an infant by an Italian family in Italy. Ethnically, the person feels Italian, eats Italian food, speaks Italian, knows Italian history, food and culture. The individual knows nothing about Korean history and culture. But when encountered by strangers, is treated as Asian.*

- **Prejudice**

Unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, regarding an ethnic, racial, social, or religious group or someone/population different from one's self. An unfavorable opinion and feelings formed beforehand, without knowledge or reason.

- **White privilege (or white skin privilege):**

A term for societal **privileges** that benefit people identified as **white** in Western countries, beyond what is commonly experienced by non-**white** people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.

- **Xenophobia**

Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.

ASSESSMENT, CONVERSATION & DIALOGUE

- **WHY** is moving beyond tolerance critical for me? My ELCA School or Early Learning Center? My congregation? My household?
- **Describe** what the celebration and integration of diversity looks, feels, tastes, smells, and sounds like right now in my daily life and work. Related to the developmental stage of my children or those I serve?
- **What is My Vision** for children & youth in my classroom, learning center, or congregation? My own household? **How** will I start on this journey? **What** resources do I need to model and live out acceptance and celebration of “the other” in my ministry and household, especially if it is a predominantly white Lutheran school, congregation, neighborhood and community? **What** will be the evidence of my living into this vision?

RESOURCES with a primary focus on our children

AlterNet

<https://www.alternet.org/2014/05/why-teaching-children-be-tolerant-about-diversity-just-wont-cut-it/>

Child Development Institute: How To Teach Your Child About Tolerance - Guidelines for Parents

<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/communication/talk-to-kids-tolerance/#ixzz3z3PlavLm>

Early Childhood News

http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=548

ELCA Disabilities Ministry

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Disability-Ministry>

ELCA Model of “Accompaniment”

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Accompaniment_\(full\).pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Accompaniment_(full).pdf)

ELCA Total Inclusion! a collaborative effort of ELCA churchwide organization and **Lutheran Outdoor Ministries** to include people who historically have been marginalized in the church — especially people of color, people with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

<https://elca.org/totalinclusion>

Ministry Links Beautifully created and comprehensive site supported by the ELCA Faith Formation Team, supporting faith formation through the lens of current issues.

<https://www.ministrylinks.online/social-justice.html>

NAEYC Anti-Bias Education <https://www.naeyc.org/taxonomy/term/106/>

Parents: <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/teaching-tolerance/raising-a-child-who-respects-difference/>

PBS Kids: Talking to Kids about Race and Racism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dq6McHf8iO4>

Peter, Paul and Mary Song: “Don’t Laugh at Me”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziLiIPViM2E>

Reconciling Works Since 1974, Reconciling Works: Lutherans for Full Participation has advocated for full welcome, inclusion, and equity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual/aromantic or ally (**LGBTQIA+**) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community. <https://www.reconcilingworks.org>

TASH: Advocates for full inclusion of children and adults with significant disabilities in every aspect of their community and to eliminate the social injustices that diminish human rights.

<https://tash.org/about/>

Teaching Tolerance – Dr. Seuss

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/its-time-to-talk-about-dr-seuss>

Teaching Tolerance – White Privilege

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2018/what-is-white-privilege-really>

“Kids have the capacity to notice race from a very early age - infants will stare longer at faces of people from races they are unfamiliar with, which tells us they notice difference. Yet difference is a long shot from racism-an awareness of stereotypes and racism doesn't begin to happen until about age 6 (McKown and Weinstein, 2003)... Between those ages, there is a lot of time for parents to teach valuable lessons to their children about how to confront difference. Parents can adopt a message of acknowledging and celebrating differences - talking, for example (and as a first step), about different cultural traditions, or dishes that different people cook... Research by Frances Aboud and Anna Doyle in 1996 showed that being able to talk about race (and racism!) actually leads to less prejudice in children... Together, this work suggests that by providing our kids with the tools to understand and talk about race, we help our kids grow, rather than perpetuate a cycle of discomfort and intolerance of difference.”

What If All The Kids Are White? Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families, 2nd Edition (*An important contribution to the conversation!*)

<https://www.amazon.com/What-All-Kids-White-Multicultural/dp/0807752126>

And more.... There is a plethora of excellent resources to guide us. What are your favorites for the classroom? Congregation? Yourself? Your household?